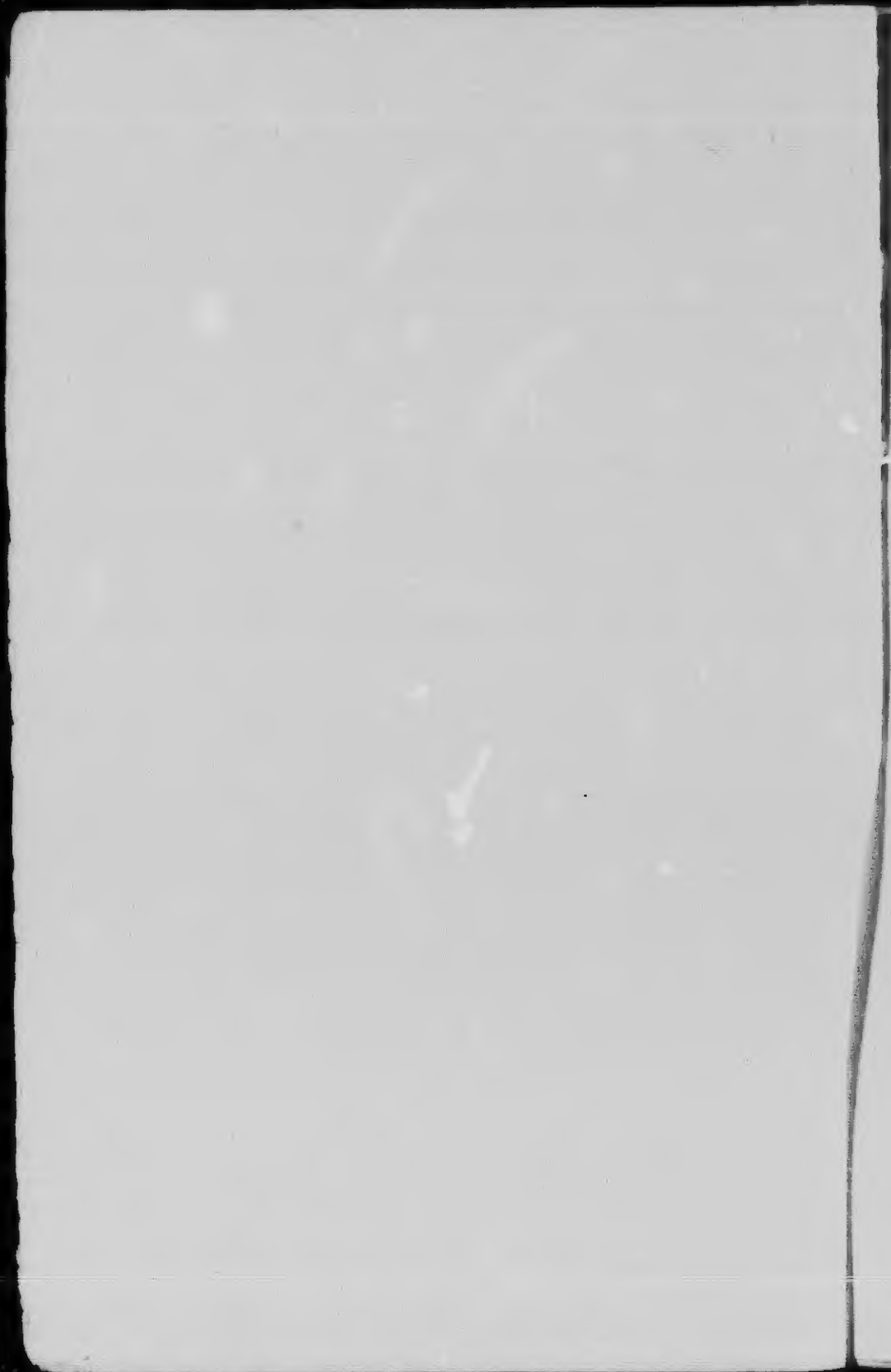
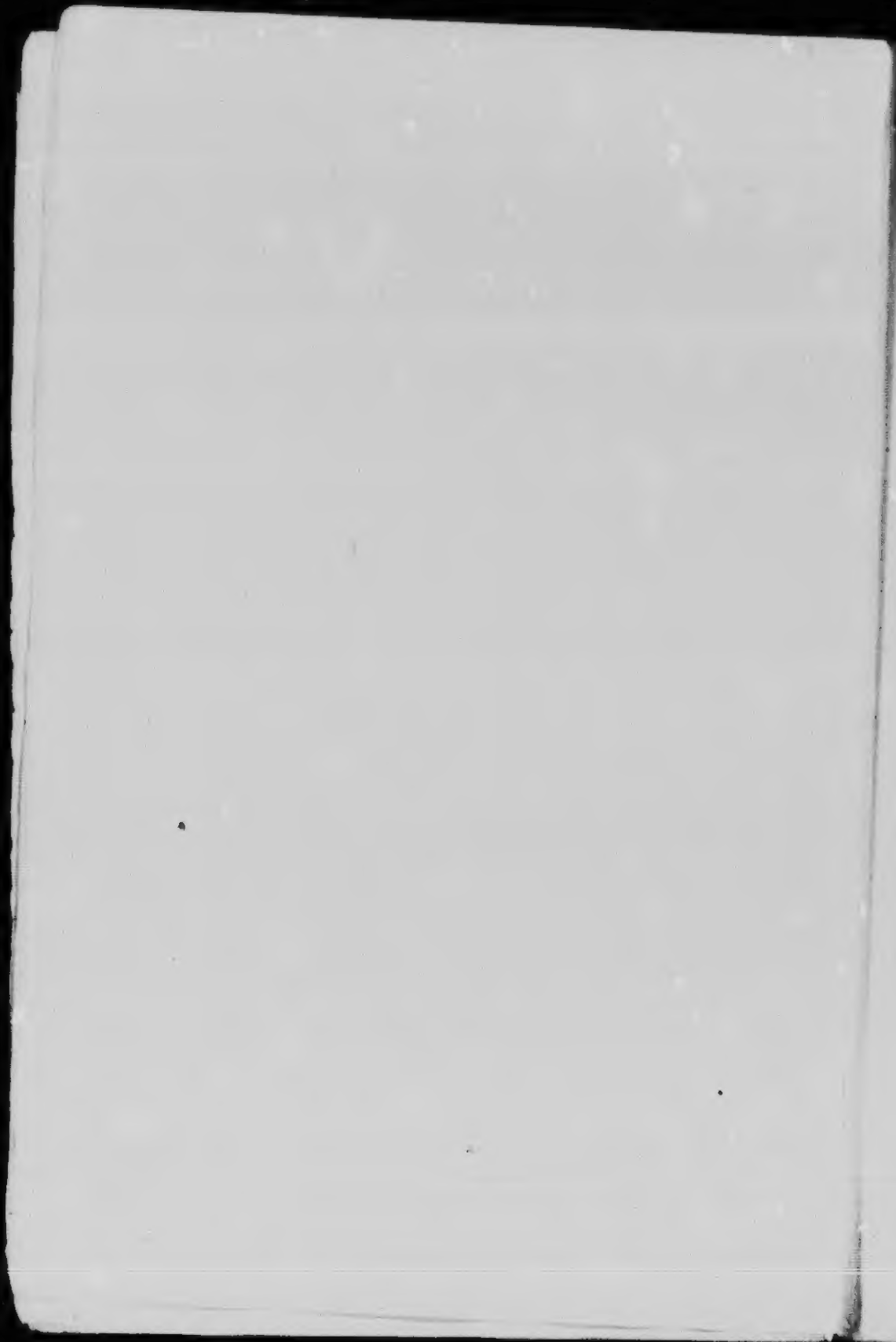


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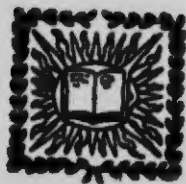


**HENRY OF NAVARRE,
OHIO**



HENRY OF NAVARRE, OHIO

BY
HOLWORTHY HALL



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WILLIAM BRIGGS

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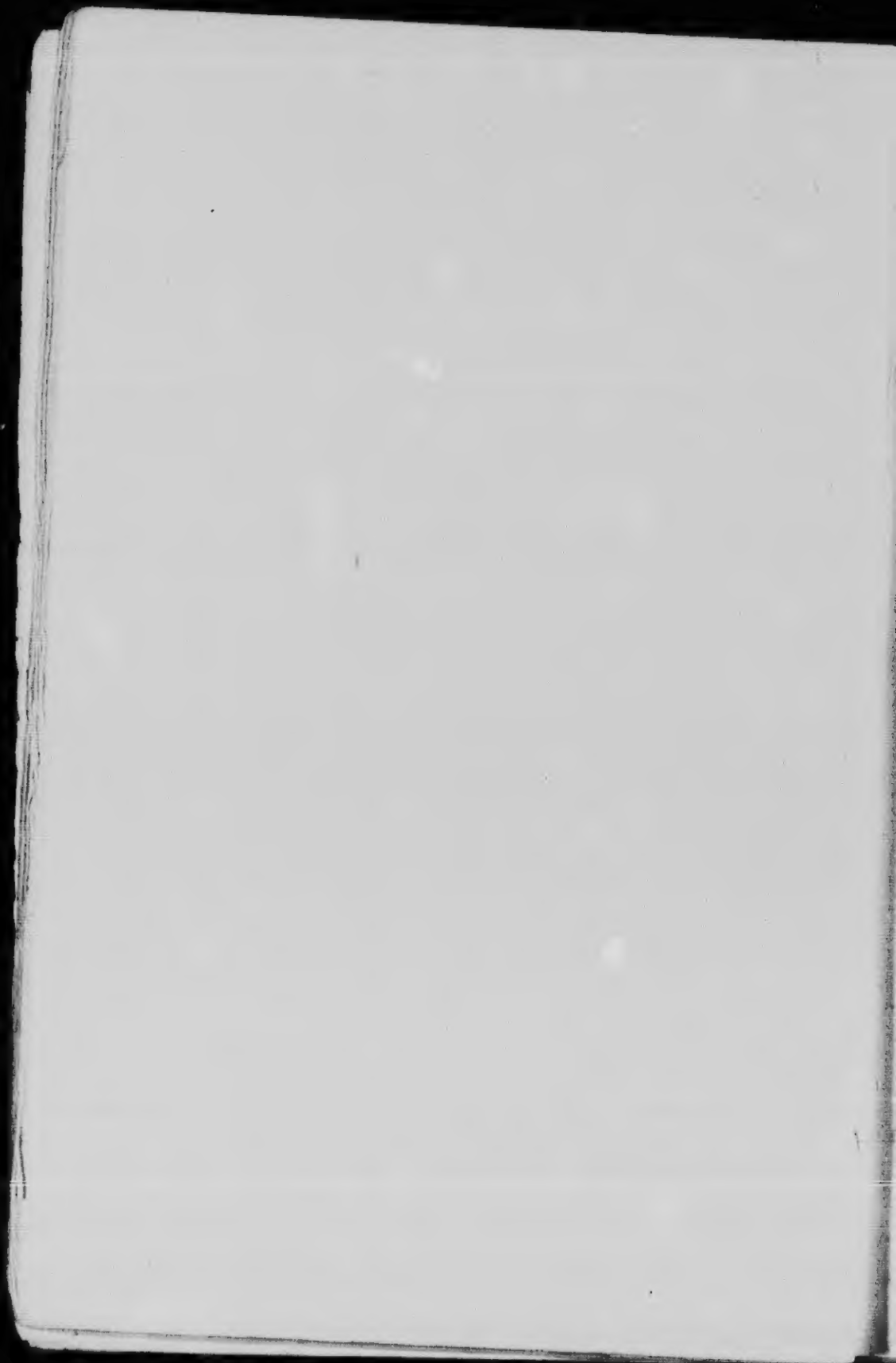
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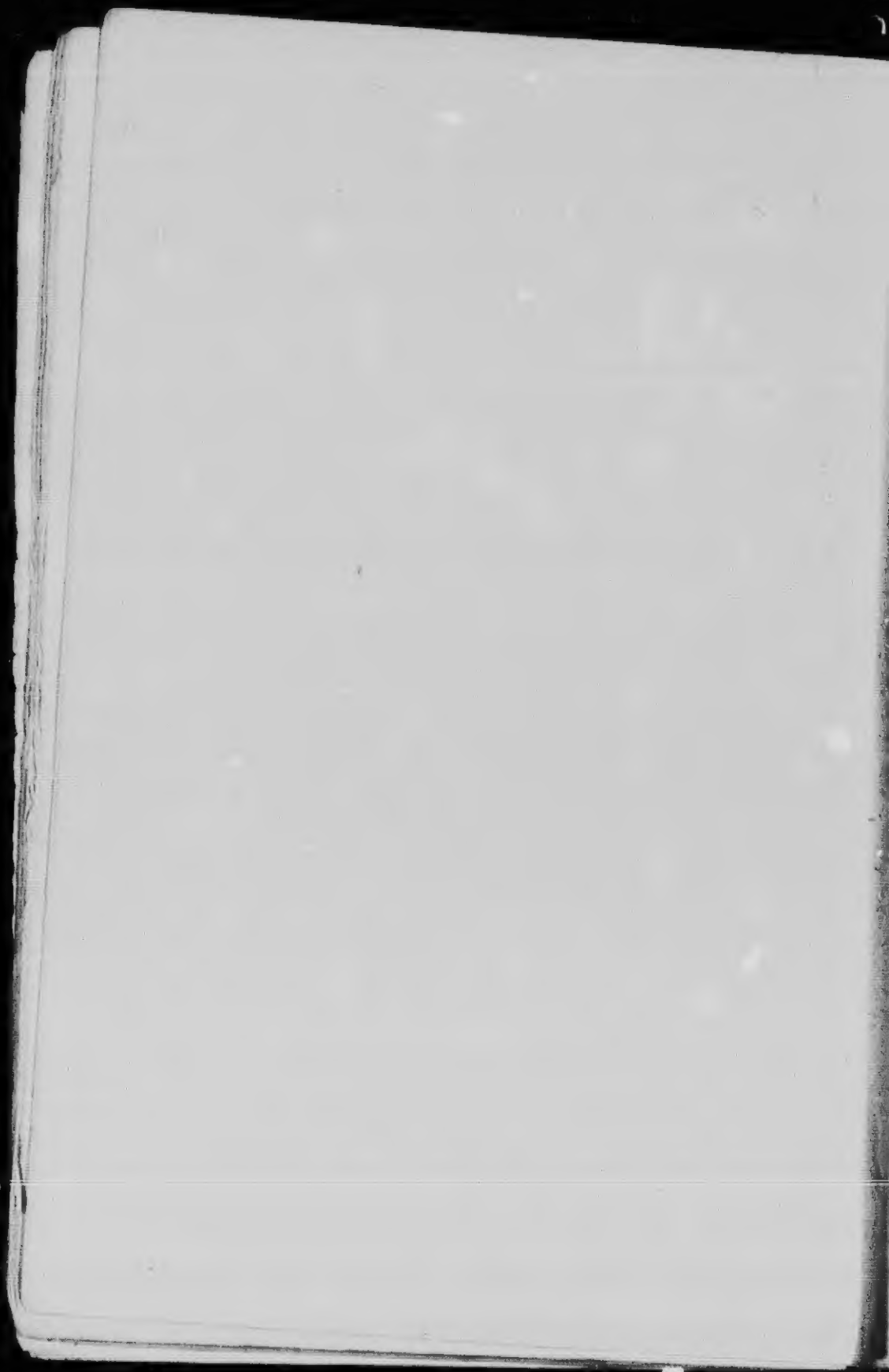
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THIS BOOK IS FOR MARNIE, WHO
SO KINDLY SUPPLIED THE AU-
THOR WITH THE TECHNICAL DE-
TAILS RELATING TO FEMININE
FRIPPERIES AND FASHIONS, BUT
WHO WILL REGRET THAT THE
HAT FROM THE RUE DE LA PAIX
IS NOT INCLUDED



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**HENRY OF NAVARRE,
OHIO**



HENRY OF NAVARRE, OHIO

CHAPTER I

THE GIRL IN THE RUNABOUT

AT seven o'clock on a lazy May morning Henry rolled over in bed, blinked approvingly at the East, and remembered with a spiritual inrush of satisfaction that it was Saturday. For a delicious moment he abandoned himself to the contemplation of present blessings, and to those of the future, when the wire-fence trust should be under his wise but firm control, the national tennis championship in his modest possession, and unlimited credit at the tailor's and haberdasher's a mere incident in the course of his triumphal progress.

With his hands locked comfortably behind

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his head, Henry reflected that if these things ever came to pass he would not forget all that he owed to the town of Navarre. Other towns might dispute the point — as the Grecian settlements disputed the birth-place of his arch-enemy, Homer — but, although Winchester might boast of its vital statistics, and Sparta offer the evidence of its kindergarten records, yet he would always recognize Navarre his patron city, Navarre his bailiwick, and Navarre the locus of his first love.

It had received the paternal wire-fence factory with open arms (at about the time when Henry took to begging for trousers); it had nurtured him in a society that left nothing to be desired beyond the prayer that all the to-morrows should be like unto all the yesterdays; it had fostered in him a civic pride quite above the comprehension of the metropolitan van-dweller — and he would not forget. He decided that the memorial should be a marble statue of his father and himself, erected at no matter what expense on the plat opposite the public library, and

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that picture post cards of the same should be on sale at the better class of bookstores.

While he was settling these details certain sounds and certain aromas rose from below-stairs. With a hasty glance at his watch the future pride and glory of Navarre sprang from his couch and disappeared with a yell of delight into his cold shower bath.

Twenty minutes later he took his place at the breakfast table garbed in such holiday attire that his father and mother smiled understandingly, and his sister Roberta, who thought him a very great man already, nodded proudly.

"Henry," said Mr. Chalmers, "I'm trying to think of some color that is n't in your tie — and I can't!"

"That's the very latest style, Dad," said Roberta pityingly. "It's the ultimate word in ties. I bought it myself. It's his fussing tie, is n't it, Henry?"

Henry blushed and proceeded to demolish his appetizer of four soft-boiled eggs. "Something like that," he admitted gruffly.

"You must think a great deal of some-

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body," said his mother. "Those flannels are at least a month ahead of the season, are n't they?"

"Mother!" reproved Roberta. "Don't you know that Henry *regulates* men's styles in Navarre? He's perfectly all right."

"Thanks," said Henry.

He finished his breakfast with the pre-occupied air of one about to embark on an undertaking of great moment, put on his hat and strolled down the gravel walk to the street.

"I'm going downtown!" shrilled Roberta from the doorway.

"I'm not," said Henry over his shoulder. "Sorry."

He thrust his hands deep into his pockets and set off in the direction of the wire-fence works. Now that he was fairly into the day he found that instead of the happiest, he was undoubtedly one of the most melancholy people on earth. His soul hurt him, and the May morning was oppressively hot and sultry. The prospect of Harvard in the autumn was as ashes in his mouth; the per-

THE GIRL IN THE RUNABOUT

spective of his cherished ambitions for restraint of trade and athletic honors flattened out to a monotonous panorama; even the consciousness of his superlatively correct costume left him unmoved.

He understood at last how great tragedies are inspired. He felt dimly that, given the proper surroundings, he could write one himself. He sensed a sudden kinship with men who desert home and family to face adventures on the high seas, to enlist under the banner of whatever continental fatherland happens to be warring at the time, to sign ship's papers without regret and cruise for copra in the waters of the Pacific.

He was bitterly taunting himself for his misspent life and for his sodden future, when a road wagon, driven by a small girl in a blue frock, overtook him; and, looking up out of the valley of his discontent, he saw the Best of her Sex, who was wholly responsible for his conflicting emotions and cheerfully ignorant of them.

"Hello, Henry!" she cried. "Jump in! I'm going for a ride."

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Any hesitation he may have felt was adequately concealed by his celerity.

"Is n't it a wonderful day?" said the girl.

"I wish Saturday came oftener, don't you? Is n't it nice not to be in the Academy to-day?"

"Oh, yes," agreed Henry, sitting on the edge of the leather cushion. "But, of course, I'm different. I'm trying to pass entrance exams, you know."

Their eyes met for the briefest fraction of a second. "Why, Henry! You're on the arm of the seat! There's lots of room."

"I'm all right, Helen," said Henry stiffly; and he directed his attention to a point midway between the horse's ears.

"Here, you drive," said the girl, tendering the reins.

"Oh, no," he protested, edging away.

"It's your horse."

"I know — but it's your place to drive, Henry."

"I don't see it. You're taking me, are n't you?"

They exchanged a second instantaneous

THE GIRL IN THE RUNABOUT

glance. "That's accidental. I'd lots rather have you take me. Please, drive."

"All right," said Henry, accepting the reins. He drove half a mile in silence. "Helen!" he said in a surprisingly loud voice.

"Yes?"

He cleared his throat, and wondered if his lapels displayed the agitation within. "I was thinking," said he, "I thought perhaps — I could call this evening."

"Why, how queer! What makes you ask? Have n't you called every Saturday night for months and months?"

The prospective trust magnate cocked his head professionally to the hoofbeats on the hard road. "Well," he ventured, "I was thinking —"

"Yes?"

"Mr. Graham — you know."

Miss Richmond became violently crimson.

"Henry! How silly!"

"Oh, I don't know," said Henry. "I thought I'd better ask."

"Mr. Graham," observed his classmate,

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"is a very nice man. My father thinks very highly of him."

"He can't play tennis worth a cent. I beat him four straight sets yesterday."

"Did you?"

"Yes. He's a Yale man."

"What of it? Isn't Yale better than Harvard?"

"Not so you'd notice it," said Henry, examining the knee action of the roadster.

"Anyway—I thought I'd better ask. I don't like to—spoil anything."

"You won't." She turned toward him, and for a fearful eternity they looked into each other's eyes. "I should think you'd be awfully proud of going to Harvard," said Miss Richmond, displaying a critical interest in the landscape. "I do hope you won't forget us."

"Oh—do you want me to write to you?"

Miss Richmond flushed. "I'm always glad to hear from my friends," she said. "When Mr. Graham went to Niagara Falls last month he wrote me the loveliest letters."

THE GIRL IN THE RUNABOUT

"He wrote to you?"

"That once — yes. Of course he does n't write to me when he's in town. The bank does so splendidly that he has to stay here most of the time; I'm so sorry for him."

"Oh — you are."

"Why," she continued, "some nights he has to sit up until nine or ten o'clock. Once they could n't account for twelve cents, and poor Mr. Graham had to stay there until he found it. I think he works harder than anybody else in Navarre."

"Getting into college is no cinch — if anybody should ask you," said Henry diffidently.

"Of course it is n't. I'm ever so proud of you, Henry."

He had discovered that without moving his head he could see her profile. Henry grinned. "I'd like to write, Helen; that is, if you'll answer me."

"It's a bargain," said Helen, offering her hand.

An electric shock numbed Henry's brain as he recoiled from the tender cruelty. Oh, to be in the wire trust without the ignominy

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of an allowance and curfew regulations! If he only had an automobile! And if he only had the nonchalant vocabulary of his favorite author!

"I saw your father on the street yesterday," said Henry desperately.

It was nearly one o'clock when he reached home. Over the immediate horizon a valiant prospect, dotted here and there with football fields, tennis courts, wire-fences factories and monuments more imperishable than bronze, spread itself before his plastic imagination. Life was real and life was earnest, but with such happiness to crown the goal, who would begrudge a few minor obstacles — such as youth and inexperience — in the path?

"Say!" said Henry, meeting his sister Roberta on the lawn. "Is n't it a peach of a day? Why is n't luncheon ready? I'm hungry."

THE GIRL IN THE RUNABOUT

THE veranda of the Richmond mansion was inclosed by lattice which in June possessed a utilitarian as well as an esthetic value on account of the wealth of June roses it supported. Within the scented precincts hung a hammock; and, to define the outskirts of friendship, there were also three or four chairs.

When Henry had tested the seating capacity of each of these in turn, his restlessness was so apparent that he was invited to share the hammock; and after the duly prescribed objections, which were successively overruled by the duly prescribed insistences, he consented. At about that time the conversation hinged upon astronomy.

"I'm awfully glad you're alone tonight," said Henry brazenly. "You know — when the moon comes through that lattice on your hair."

"What's that to do with our being alone?"

"Oh, nothing," said Henry. "Not at all."

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It was — only an observation. Are you quite comfortable?"

"Yes," said Helen. "Are you?"

"Oh, very."

"I do hope you won't forget us when you're so far away, Henry — but I suppose you will. I've heard the girls in Cambridge are adorable."

"I suppose they are," he admitted complacently.

"I hope so — for your sake."

"I'm afraid I shall be pretty busy, Helen."

"Too busy to write us about it all?"

"No!" He braced himself with one hand on the back of the hammock.

"You don't seem to be very comfortable, Henry."

"Oh, but I am," he maintained. "That is — if you are."

"I certainly am. Isn't it a heavenly night?"

A strand of her hair floated across his cheek and, thrilling to the touch, he suffered it to remain. "Helen!"

THE GIRL IN THE RUNABOUT

"Yes?"

"Are you sure you wanted me to come to-night?"

"Of course I did — silly!"

"That's all right, then," he said, sighing profoundly. "Did you ever notice how your voice — outdoors at night — sounds so different? Softer, somehow. Everything's soft at night, is n't it?"

"Don't you like it?"

"Oh, yes," said Henry, "very much indeed." His hand slipped six inches from the back of the hammock. "Helen!"

"Yes?"

"Are you — perfectly comfortable?"

"Yes — are you?"

His hand descended another six inches. Somewhere in the darkness it touched a smooth surface that separated into feminine fingers.

He retreated rapidly. "I expect to come home for vacations, you know," he said, with some hoarseness.

"That will be nice."

"Yes. Did n't you want me to come?"

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"You know I do. I'm always glad to see people I like."

"Then I'll come," he promised. His hand crept along the woven net until it was halted by the same barrier as before. After a tremulous pause, which was devoted to an analysis of the sensation, he closed his own fingers around it.

"It is a lovely evening," observed Miss Richmond, feigning great unconcern.

"Is n't it?"

"Tell me, Henry — how many times have you done that — to other girls?"

"Never!"

"Oh, Henry! But of course you'd say so! You could n't be over seventeen years old — and not —"

"It's true," he vowed shakily.

"Honest?"

"My word! And — how often — have you —"

"Oh, never!" said Miss Richmond with great dignity. "Did you ever see such a moon?"

"Never."

THE GIRL IN THE RUNABOUT

From the books that he had read and the heroes that he had admired, Henry brought forth the titanic sophistry that he had despised in the books and hardly countenanced in the heroes. He summoned his voice from the almost unfathomable depths into which it had sunk and propounded the burning question.

"Helen!"

"Yes?"

"Did you—did you ever see the dog star?"

"Never," she said innocently. "Where is it?"

Afterward they sat for centuries, shy and silent, while the moonlight shone through the lattice on her hair.

IT was a sudden invitation from the Chicago uncle that took Henry from his native heath of Navarre to more worthy opponents on the clay courts of the Athletic Club. It was his first sight of a city that needs no State to identify it, and he enjoyed

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it for two glorious months without sacrificing his loyalty to the wire-fence business to the fleshpots of the Stockyards. Among other bits of useful information he discovered that girls are fair in every port, and that individual instruction is preferable to the correspondence school. Those months were of inestimable value to Henry's character and to his forehand strokes from the base-line.

Through Roberta's letters he began to discern what he had only suspected previously, namely, that there was Society even in Navarre. For example, he read and re-read with wrath and indignation that Roberta planned a tea and that Helen Richmond was not to be among those present. He wrote seven pages, mostly adjectives, to demand the reason for the exclusion, and was told in nine pages and three postscripts that she could n't stand the acid test. As a schoolmate in the Navarre Academy she was within the pale, and if she chanced to marry a man like George Graham, Society would present her with a return ticket; but

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for the nonce, although there was no question of her being a nice girl and all that, yet she simply did n't belong to the élite.

Postscript Number One: Money has nothing to do with the case. Mr. Richmond has a *wad*. The decree of exile is based on the fact of eligibility, and for reasons which you simply could n't understand. It distinctly does not infer that Helen is n't a sweet, lovely girl.

Postscript Number Two: Roberta is not a snob. Her opinion is practically dictated by the social arbiter of Navarre, whose husband conducts a retail hardware business, and whose son eloped with the telephone operator of the wire-fence factory. Society plays under this season's rules; every one is very sorry, for Helen is personally a sweet, charming girl.

Postscript Number Three: Certainly every one will be nice to Helen, and every one hopes she will marry the right man and take the position to which her beauty and her talent entitle her. She is not yet seventeen and there is plenty of time. Rumor

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has it that it is to be George Graham, who earns twenty dollars a week in the First National Bank, but is for an undefinable reason one of the ultra elect. Every one hopes it is to be — for Helen is a lovely, sweet little girl.

DURING the long ride from Chicago to Navarre Henry pondered deeply his duty to civilization. He treasured three letters from Miss Helen Richmond, but they were written in an abnormally large hand, and made for quantity instead of quality. She had said nothing of the awful fate to which she was destined, but she surely must realize it by this time. He wondered if it hurt her as much as it hurt him.

He still considered her the prettiest girl he knew — and he had kissed her. To be sure there might be a few broad-minded people in the world who would say that a single moonlight embrace between Miss Sixteen and Mr. Seventeen is not equivalent to a declaration, but this relief was not open to

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Henry, because he could not conceive it. He had his mother and Roberta to reckon with, and he could n't believe that they would approve his cultivation of a girl they would n't invite to divide their tea and frosted cakes. Like many a better man before him Henry shuddered to behold the ramifications of social reform. It was not clear to him that Society is exclusive in inverse proportion to the population of the town, and he had not been told that Our Set is founded on nothing more tangible than instinct. Manlike he thought it was jealousy.

He was seventeen, a citizen of the United States, and under its Constitution he was entitled to life, love and the pursuit of happiness — synonyms, all three. Why could n't the world let him enjoy them?

When the train came to a standstill at the little granite station he was fascinated into an exquisite state of loose-jawed delight at the sight of Miss Helen Richmond on the platform. He wanted to salute her according to the dictates of his heart, but

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he did n't dare. And when he climbed into the runabout beside his father he was wondering if she had come to meet him, or George Graham, who unexpectedly emerged from the forward Pullman.

HENRY, wearing a new tie, which was pronounced sensational even in Chicago, went down to call on Miss Richmond, and found her wearing the gown which was inextricably bound to his affections. They shook hands solemnly.

"I've come back, you see," said Henry brightly.

"Yes — I'm awfully glad, Henry."

"I hated to stay away so long. I've got only another month in Navarre — and then I'm off for four years. We'll have to make the most of it, Helen."

"Yes," she conceded, "we will, won't we?"

Henry looked at her curiously. Whether it was due to the warm weather, or to her knowledge of the tenets of Society, or to

THE GIRL IN THE RUNABOUT

his absence, she appeared to have aged a year during the two short months. Just before he departed for Chicago he had kissed her; now she sat in the Richmond living-room with her hands folded in her lap, and calmly inquired after his health.

"I came over," said Henry, "to see if you'd like to take a drive this afternoon."

"Why," said Helen, in confusion, "I'd love to go with you, but I'm going out with some one else."

"You are?"

She nodded. "I want to go with you, Henry, but of course you know how it is, don't you?"

"Yes. There's not much time left, though."

She caught his hand with a pretty gesture. "Henry, no matter what happens — even after you go to college — we'll always be good friends, won't we?"

"We sure will," said he with strained enthusiasm.

"You've done much for me; I can't

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begin to tell you how much! I wish you were going to stay here forever."

"I have n't done anything I know about," he said.

"Yes, you have. When I was a very little girl I always looked up to you, Henry. You were the first boy I ever knew who didn't tease me. You were *kind*. Then you taught me to play tennis and ride and play the mandolin"—she laughed faintly—"I think you taught me all the things that really count."

"Oh, if that's what you mean, you've done a lot for me, too. You—you—" He racked his imagination for a catalog. "Well, anyhow," he said, "it did me good to know you, Helen."

"And you'll never forget, will you?" she helped him finish.

"Not in a thousand years," he declared. "Why, I—"

There was a sudden ring at the doorbell; they rose to greet Mr. George Graham, who also shook hands formally.

"Some other time, Henry," said Miss

THE GIRL IN THE RUNABOUT

Richmond. "You'll come to see me soon?"

"I'd be charmed," said Henry.

He went dizzily out to the sidewalk and turned north. Somewhere in his breast a chord had snapped; it may have been the lute string that played his first love song. Her manner toward him was so altered — affectionate, but still tempered with a strange reserve — that apprehension was upon him, and doubt, and sorrow.

Graham's horse, pawing and rearing spiritedly, afforded him a momentary respite from his suffering, for he loved horses. He appraised the animal with joyless accuracy, sighed heavily, and turned and walked one block north, thinking.

A startled scream brought Henry to his senses. One lightning glance showed him what had happened. Graham, about to vault to the seat beside Miss Richmond, had missed the step, and the horse had bolted. Graham, clinging desperately to the runabout body, was struggling to avoid the wheels and to reach a point of safety; but

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even if he had succeeded in the attempt, it might have been only a postponement of disaster, for the reins dragged loose on the ground.

Henry dug his toes into the turf and took the middle of the road at a bound. His hand grasped the bit as the horse swept past him; his hundred and seventy pounds of solid weight depended from it; and Henry, with muscles trained by every exercise known to the youth of America, *sawed!*

It was brief heroism. A hundred yards from the starting point the horse, trembling violently, was checked; and Henry, battered, bruised, but on his feet, thanked Heaven.

"Now, I — I'll hold him," he said with difficulty, "while you get in. He's — all right now."

There was no answer. Graham was sitting on the floor of the runabout, with his head in Miss Richmond's lap; her arms were around him and her expression was unmistakable.

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"I'm all right," said Graham stoutly. "I can sit up — look out, Helen! Somebody'll see you! Ugh! I must have sprained my ankle on that wheel!"

"Lead him back, lead him back!" said Helen hysterically. "George — *dear!* Tell me, are you hurt?"

Henry, pale, shaken, and very quiet, led the horse to the Richmond gate, and tethered him to the hitching-post. Then, limping much worse than Graham, he assisted that gentleman to the veranda and deposited him in the hammock. Helen was at his feet.

"Oh, George!" she was saying. "George! Oh, Henry! You were so brave!" She passed her hand across her eyes. "Oh, you poor boy! Does it hurt, George, dear?"

"No — it's nothing." He grinned sheepishly. "We'll have to tell him, dear. It'll be all over town to-morrow."

"I don't think you need to tell me," said Henry.

Miss Richmond was able to smile through

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her tears. "We meant to keep it a secret — for at least two years," she said.

"But —"

"The truth is —" said Graham.

"We're engaged," faltered Helen.

"Since — since yesterday. It is better now, dearest?"

"Much better. Well — it can't be a secret now, can it?"

Henry, admirably composed, offered a hand to each. "Congratulations," he said.

"I — I hope you have a corking time, both of you. I wish you joy, you know. There is n't anything else I can do, is there?"

"Henry! You're hurt, too!"

The boy waved a hand deprecatingly.

"What's the use?" he said. "I'm not engaged!"

ROBERTA, who was alone in the house, met her brother at the door and hugged him frantically.

"You great, big peach!" she cried.

"You're a hero, Henry! I'm proud of

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you! Mrs. Patterson saw it out of the window; she telephoned! Are you hurt?"

"Barked my ankle," he muttered. "That brute of a horse stepped on my toe too. Look out, Roberta!"

"Henry! If you're sure you're not hurt, tell me — is it true they're engaged?"

"It seems so."

She was quick to catch the intonation.

"Henry! You didn't really *care*?"

His head moved slowly. Roberta caught him on the landing.

"You poor boy. It's a shame! You're twice the man he is — even if he is twenty-four!"

"Graham's all right. Let me go!"

"I never guessed it," said Roberta, patting the shoulder that was on a level with her head. I'm so sorry, dear. I never thought you wanted to marry anybody!"

In a sudden flash of light Henry visualized the college career, the wire-fence trust, the tennis championship — and who ever heard of a married man winning the tennis championship?

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"Marry!" he said uncertainly. "I don't — think I did."

"You did n't want to marry her?"

Henry unclasped her arms, and took a step upward. "Roberta," he said dumbly, "I don't believe it ever occurred to me. I — I just sort of loved her!"

"Why, my little brother!"

Henry stopped on the stairs, and shock his forefinger at her. "None of that," he commanded brusquely. "None of the baby stuff, Roberta. I'm only three years younger than you are. But look here — you ask Helen Richmond to your next party; understand?"

"I wrote you —"

"I remember what you wrote all right," said Henry confidently. "So *you* remember that she's engaged to George Graham. Do you understand? She's back in Society — anyway."

CHAPTER II

CONCERNING THIS BUSINESS OF MARRIAGE

WHEN Henry climbed up the steps of the Pullman sleeper he carried in his suitcase an assortment of reading matter which the household executive, his sister Roberta, had provided on her own initiative and at her own expense. She had heard that under the guidance of a pocket dictionary a Middle Westerner may safely venture east of Chicago; and she knew that, with an anthology of quotations, even the son of a wire-fence manufacturer may pass safely along the stony paths of Appalachian literature. She was of the opinion that Henry's advent in New England would furnish no little prestige for Harvard and some glory for Henry, and she was resolved that he should suffer no

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inconvenience from a lack of textual preparation. If the respective interests of home and Cambridge were as widely different as she had been led to expect she could at least see to it that on his arrival Henry would not be taken off his guard, and she hoped as much for Harvard. The suitcase, as the bystanders at the station noticed with gaping amusement, made her brother stagger as he climbed the steps.

It was not in the nature of Henry for Roberta to know that he departed from the Western Limited at the Back Bay Station in Boston much more briskly than he had advanced to meet it at Navarre, Ohio. The fat, red *Who's Who in America* had volplaned from the window of his section into a creek beside the right of way near Cleveland; the three-volume edition of *How to Grow Strong in Your Own Room* had amalgamated with a pile of rubbish at Buffalo; and the three hundred and eighty pages of *Harvard — Past and Present* were floating placidly down the Hudson in the moonlight; but no one, not

THIS BUSINESS OF MARRIAGE

even Roberta, could assert that Henry had failed to hear the call of literature and of life. The latest football guide was still in the suitcase, and the new rules were imperishably engraved on his memory.

From the moment of his arrival in the red-brick city Henry liked Harvard. For the first time in his life he found his appetite unnoticed and even outdistanced. He could buy astonishingly tailored clothes without the vivid comment of a selfmade and — by corollary — readymade father; he could indulge to the utmost the catholic taste in neckties which Roberta had winter-killed during the year she had subscribed to so many fashion magazines; and he could breakfast when he got up instead of being constrained to rise in time for breakfast. When he yearned for the intellectual stimulus of the drama there was no one to criticize his instinct for seats in row "AA"; and finally, under no circumstances and according to no conditions outside his own volition was he obliged to talk to girls.

The mutual quality of the situation was

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aggravated by the fact that Harvard liked Henry. He was of a pachydermic contour, and had a disconcerting knack of shifting his weight that seriously inconvenienced the Andover and Exeter guards and tackles on Saturday afternoons; he could sing a soaring tenor to popular songs concerning busy bumblebees and large, beautiful dolls to whom in the flesh he would have been mortally afraid to address a halting syllable; he liked jokes and had heard very few good ones. His room was never so orderly that the transient guest feared to put his feet on the desk; so that he gradually acquired fame as a Bohemian, a good listener, and a ready signer of vouchers, than which no arts tend more to mellow and conciliate one's fellowmen.

By the time bills for Christmas gifts are in the form of statements, Henry was reckoned among the leaders of a cosmopolitan class. It was reported that in another year he would stride into 'Varsity football history with both his abnormally extensive feet, and that in baseball he at-

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tracted the envy of unlettered professionals. Smaller Freshmen stared at him in the Locker Building, and grinned deprecatingly when he told them how he had to putty the chinks in his back muscles to insure the fit of his soft-rolled coats.

Henry had won the altitude prize, but he didn't know how to get down again. When he went to an informal reception in town he was heralded as one of the tentative lions of junior society, and he succumbed to the inevitable. Overnight he turned morose and sulky; he refused to accept invitations to billiards, or bowling, or Boston; and declined to eat more than two or three meals in a day. In reply to anxious questioning he said that his sleep was fitful and broken, and that his weight had lapsed unaccountably from 171 to 169; and he sang only to himself, and mournfully. The class, privately and publicly, decided that something was the matter with Henry.

The spokesman of the delegation was a youth of parts. He slipped noisily into Henry's room at the witching hour of half-

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past nine on Saturday night, and made himself comfortable on the divan with a specimen of Roberta's best affection and her worst embroidery. Then he smoked and waited.

Before the fire Henry smoked and scowled. It was a long time before he groaned feebly, and turned leaden eyes upon his friend. "Whitaker!"

"Shut up — chatterbox," said Whitaker lazily.

"I say, Whitaker!"

"You say it."

Henry wilted before the sympathy that he understood. "I say, Whitaker — what would you do if — if the finest girl in the world — don't snicker, you idiot! — asked you to a cotillion — and you did n't dance?"

Whitaker rested luxuriously on the point of his spine and blew a nest of smoke rings.

"When does the agony take place?"

"Wednesday — Brattle Hall."

"You have the sense of a Sophomore," said Whitaker paternally. "I'm going myself." He turned on his elbow and

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dragged himself up to his full height of five feet three. "Get up, you big Romeo! I'll teach you in three lessons with profanity, or six without. Come along out in the hall where it's slippery."

HENRY smoothed the tails of his evening coat and looked at his watch for the fifth time in five minutes. "What time is it?" he demanded.

"Half-past seven," said Whitaker.

"An hour more," groaned Henry. He inserted a timid forefinger between his neck and the sharp points of a collar that was less comfortable than the advertisements implied.

"I always like these informal dances," commented Whitaker. "Girls all come by themselves in Papa's boat; no expense for a taxi. Don't have to take 'em home either. Fine for the pocketbook, and you can save all your talk for the supper dance."

"Flowers!" said Henry hoarsely, sitting

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sharply upright. "Bob! Did we order flowers?"

"Of course we did. Don't you remember? We matched and you lost."

"Yes, but — Bob?"

"Present."

"After you glide around *this* way — what do you do next?"

"Same thing with a little reverse English, old top."

"If I should step on her gown — if I should!"

"You will," promised Whitaker dispassionately. "Everybody's doing it now. Or her feet."

Henry flicked the subliminal consciousness of a speck of dust from his shirtfront, and tested the knot of his sixth and last dress tie with an air of interrogation.

"All right aloft," Whitaker reassured him. "You look grand — simply grand!"

"Bob — just once — watch me through the thing again, will you? Whistle something slow and lingery. That's it — am I right?"

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He waltzed desperately about the table, missed by the fraction of an inch a collision with his desk chair, and came back to the starting point with his arms embracing an imaginary fragile partner.

"Is n't the floor wonderful to-night?" said Whitaker in a shaky falsetto.

"Confound you, Bob, don't make fun of me! It's downright beastly of you! Can't you see I'm serious? This is n't any joy ride!"

"Strange," said his friend. "I never thought of a dance as a funeral procession."

Henry looked at his watch again. "What time is it, Bob?"

"Four dollars and a half."

"I don't mind telling you—in sacred confidence," said Henry, fighting hard to keep his teeth from chattering, "that she's wonderful. She's a perfect peach. She's—wonderful!"

"Did n't you want a transfer, Henry, or are you staying on the same line all night?"

"I leave it to anybody," said Henry

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generously. He took out his watch and replaced it without looking at the dial.

"Half an hour more," he gibbered.

"Bob, old fellow, you'll stay by me, won't you? I'm likely to forget everything when I get there. I—I'm beginning to forget already. Say—will you watch me once more—"

"What's the use?"

"I think I might be a little nervous."

"I never would have guessed it," said Whitaker dryly. "Well, are you coming?"

"Wha—what?"

"Coming?"

"Why, it—it does n't begin yet."

"No, but we have to get there, you know, before we can dance. It's quite the custom."

Henry's knees quaked under him, but he succeeded in donning coat and hat without assistance. He heard his feet echoing down marble steps; he felt the keen night air on his face. Ahead of him a brilliantly lighted building magnetized his eyes and held them

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fascinated. Speedily he was shouldering his way through files of men, some of whom he knew he recognized but hadn't the presence of mind to address; his coat was ruthlessly stripped from him by an attendant, and while he was fumbling for a tip his friend Whitaker disappeared and left him derelict. A personality not the least his own seemed to tumble headlong into a vast roomful of graceful creatures who all looked at him and laughed; an orchestra crooned feelingly in the middle distance; a small section of eternity flitted past; somehow he was treading the measures that he had learned so painfully and irreligiously, and his arm encircled the fairest beauty of a very fair and lovely universe.

Miss Adams addressed a platitude to him, and he yearned to reply, but his brain reeled with elementary mathematics and he uttered a compliment that was an incoherent grunt.

"Isn't the floor heavenly?" said she; and Henry, remembering Whitaker's sophistry, laughed, lost count and collided heavily with a Senior who wore loose-fit-

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ting glasses. Blushing and stammering Henry released his partner and groped about on the polished floor.

"It's of no consequence," said the Senior mendaciously. "Please don't bother — Miss Adams is waiting for you."

With a final apology to the Senior, Henry turned to her, but the orchestra was playing the final chords and it was too early in the evening for an encore. Three minutes remained for social intercourse with the lady of his dreams, and their next dance was the tenth. It was a cruel separation for one who longed to hear the complete story of her life since they had parted the previous Thursday. He had so much to say to her that they compromised by confirming the state of the weather.

By the time the tenth dance came Henry had trod on the toes of all the prettiest girls and trembled on the verge of imbecility. Miss Adams was kind; she murmured conventionally, "Shall we sit it out?" and led him to a cozy corner behind some adequate potted palms.

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"I thought you told me you did n't dance?" she remarked curiously after they were seated.

"I did n't," confessed Henry. "I learned."

"Why, you do splendidly. Did you really learn — just for me?"

"Yes. It was a very small thing to do — for you. I wish I had half a chance of doing bigger things for you."

"You funny boy," said Miss Adams appreciatively. "Why should you want to do things — for me?"

The turn of conversation awoke in Henry's breast a pæan of thanksgiving. His embarrassment crystallized into a convulsive calm, and he brought out the best of his vocabulary for the delectation of Miss Adams.

When she reached home that night her elder sister was waiting with a cup of hot bouillon and a sympathetic spirit. "Did you have a good time, dear?" she inquired. "Were there any nice men there?"

"Yes," said Miss Adams, stifling a

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sincere yawn. "There was one especially — a dear, sweet boy. I wish I knew his mother."

"His mother? Why?"

"Because," said Miss Adams, daintily sipping her bouillon. "I'd like to congratulate her on her son. I've been proposed to — in the sweetest way imaginable — by a Freshman I've known four weeks."

ONE of the greatest blessings the world has to offer a neurasthenic or a lover is the safety razor. Henry might have cast a ballot for the tailor, but when he left his room and set out in a general direction of the Cambridge reservoir he did not realize that but for the safety razor he could not have allowed his countenance to shine in the presence of his divinity, for his hand had trembled so that he could hardly brush his hair.

At the corner of the street he was accosted by a genial atheist who said that girls were silly and pitched a deceptive medley of

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sweeping curves. "Hello, Henry. See you to-morrow?"

"I suppose so; any place in particular?"

"Why, yes. Three-thirty in the cage."

"Cage!" repeated Henry stupidly.

"Freshman baseball called for to-morrow, you know. Everybody says you're sure to make first base."

"Oh!" said Henry. He saw in swift perspective the long afternoons of weary practice, while another man accompanied a certain attractive young woman to symphony concerts and matinées. He saw her applauding boat races, track games, and baseball matches by the side of some confident upper class man who probably had a permanent sweetheart waiting for him back home; and the races and meets and matches would be of the University teams, for no loyal resident of Cambridge tempts fate with the Freshmen. "I'm not sure," said Henry, "that I'll come out for baseball."

"Not come out? Why, you've got to come out! We need every man we can get!

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"There's no question about it, Henry, it's your duty to the class to come out."

"There may be a higher duty," profaned Henry on the defense.

"Well, I should say not!" The pitcher laughed shortly.

"It happens that there is," announced Henry. "I'd better say so now — so that there won't be any misunderstanding — that I won't be there. I'll be too busy this spring."

He left the pitcher standing open-mouthed on the corner, and hurried away toward the reservoir. A brisk walk of a quarter of an hour brought him to a big stone house set among a cluster of the wonderful Cambridge elms. His mood, which was superlative as he strode up the brick walk, drooped to despair when Miss Adams greeted him cordially and introduced her father.

"I've been looking forward to this meeting," said Mr. Adams, proffering a box of very plutocratic-looking cigars, and leading the trio into the library. "We'll sit in here

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so you and I can smoke. As I was saying, you're one of the elect now, you know."

Henry asked the question with his eyes on Miss Adams. "Yours was the first Freshman team to win in a good many years," said her father. "In my day we generally came back from New Haven by way of Albany — to escape notice. And besides, you were captain, were n't you?"

"Yes," said Henry desperately. "They — they had to pick somebody."

"College has changed in the last few years," said Mr. Adams. "In business you'll find that college degrees are more and more in demand. I don't know if it's due to the publicity of athletics, but at any rate the graduate does n't need to be ashamed of himself as he used to be."

"It may be that nicer men are coming to college," suggested the girl with an adorable smile toward the Freshman.

"No — they're learning more while they're here. I suppose you remember the statement that Harvard was once the wisest spot in the world?"

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"I don't think I ever heard it," said Henry, trying to keep his gaze on the speaker.

"Because," said Mr. Adams cheerfully, "they say that the Freshmen knew something when they came, and the Seniors nothing when they went, so that the intermediate knowledge of five thousand men was left here. I don't think that's true in these days."

"Cambridge is the most attractive city in the world," declared Henry, this time not daring to sway so much as an eyelash; but he heard Miss Adams laughing quietly, and rejoiced in the success of the innuendo.

"And yet there are men," said his host, "who care very little for it. In my class, I remember, there was one man who should have been brilliant. Somehow he met a girl in town, and what did the shortsighted fellow do but quit the place in Freshman year and marry her." Henry's blood froze in his veins, and for a moment he wondered if he would faint. She had told

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him then! "Instead of spending four happy years out here he assumed the necessary obligations out of hand, and what was the result?"

"What was it?" echoed Henry.

"He never got a fair start in life, that's all," said Mr. Adams. "He was too young to bear all those responsibilities, and, although he should have been brilliant, he's been an ordinary plodder ever since. He had too much handicap."

"Men do that every year, I understand," said Henry carelessly. "Some prefer it."

"Men don't realize what they're doing," maintained Mr. Adams. "First, they're too immature to know their own minds, and second, they have the consciousness — afterward — of having failed in an undertaking."

"What undertaking, Father?"

"Failed in completing a good work well begun. Oh, well," he smiled, "I'm preaching again. You mustn't mind me," he added, turning to Henry. "I've lived here so long, and seen so many different aspects

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of college, that I'm as heartless as a phonograph when some one turns the crank. I suppose you two want to discuss Ibsen, eh?" He rose and flicked the ash from his cigar. "Good-night, my boy, I'm glad you're here. Alice has so many gay young dogs in her life that I'm pleased to see she appreciates a sensible man like yourself. We'll hope to see you often."

They shook hands heartily, and Henry felt his muscles relax in utter relief. His fears were quite dispelled by the tone of the older man and he was himself again — with variations. He waited patiently until the footsteps in the hall died away. "It seems a year since I saw you — Alice."

She smiled provokingly. "Father called you sensible."

"I am; I'm the sensiblest person you ever heard. I'm so sensible that it's a bore to be a Freshman."

"I did n't know that anything could bore a Freshman — except small talk."

"You don't call this small talk, do you?" said Henry, aghast.

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"Why not? If I remember, we were to discuss Ibsen?"

"With you in the room?" reproached Henry. "If I knew your father better I'd say he was —"

"Yes?"

"Short-sighted," responded Henry, and they both laughed.

He felt that it was delightfully informal to be here in the library, where books lent an atmosphere of companionship that his father's consignment lots had never afforded. It was still more delightful to be smoking; there was use for at least one clammy hand, and he had a reason for averting his eyes to the ash-receiver whenever he felt his nerves tingling.

"I wonder," said Henry slowly, "if you've thought over — what I said to you the other night."

Miss Adams gasped — at the very question she had expected. "I can truthfully say — that I have, Henry."

"I've thought of nothing else," said the boy frankly. "You see, what your father

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said struck pretty close to where I live. At first I did n't want to come to Cambridge at all — that was my sister's scheme to bolster up the family record; but in these few months — I loved it! And yet — I want to give it up."

"Give it up?" Her brain was frenzied in search for a reply that would be kind and convincing at the same time.

"Yes, give it up," said Henry stoutly. "There's nothing in it for me now."

"But — your baseball team, and football next autumn —"

"Those things! You talk as though they amount to something! Perhaps you'll ask me to spin tops on Massachusetts Avenue or play marbles in the Yard?"

"Don't those things mean a great deal to most Freshmen?"

Henry hurled the remainder of the excellent cigar into the fireplace and faced her. "Am I 'most Freshmen'? Don't you know me better than that? I'm willing to leave to-morrow, if you say so — and you know why!"

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Miss Adams was afraid that he was coming to her, and she did not know how to check his impetuosity. "You're so — headlong," she stammered impotently. "You — startle me."

"I'm sorry," said Henry. "I know — I — could n't help it — really I could n't. Of course you must have time to think, Alice. When will you tell me? Say when you'll tell me, and I'll wait — as patiently as I can."

"A week from to-night — can you come then?"

"I should worry!" said the Freshman. "Yes, I'll come. And — I'd better go now, Alice, because — you see — I can't stay." He was wholly ingenuous; he rose decisively and held out his hand to her.

After he left her, numb to the wrist from his grasp, she leaned against the wall inside the door, trying to collate her thoughts.

To her at that moment came her father, composed and serious. "Well, Alice, did you tell the lad?"

She shook her head miserably. "No,

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Dad — not this time. He's such a dear boy — but so intense — and it's going to hurt him so much."

IN SHEER despair of sanity Henry wandered down to the baseball cage on the afternoon of the fateful Wednesday. His hopes were still roseate, but a vague sensation of guilt was upon him as he crossed the bridge. Once in the cage, however, he forgot his problems for a merciful half-hour, during which he listened charitably to the coach vituperating his best friends who were fumbling easy grounders on the hard dirt floor. Anything would have been a relief; he gladly accepted an invitation to slip out of coat and waistcoat, adjust a well-seasoned glove, and try his hand at the practice.

"See here, you!" said the coach of the Freshmen, "why have n't you been out before?"

"Too busy," said Henry, neatly plucking a hard-hit ball from the dirt.

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"Are you eligible?"

"Surest thing you know," said Henry, lining the ball into the back net.

"Will you be out to-morrow?"

The delicious stinging of his palms awoke in him a feeling akin to gladness, and it was the first time in several weeks that he had enjoyed this sensation. "I'll think of it," said Henry; and shortly afterward he gave up his glove with some reluctance, and went back to his room for the last sad rites of celibacy.

MISS ADAMS had never looked more lovely than when she came to meet him, and her eyes had never held such a marvelous light as when she gave her hand to the Freshman suitor. "Sit down, Henry," she said kindly, and he obeyed her with a recurring sense of guilt. It was as though he had been detected in the act of making love to a married woman, and it irritated him. "Henry," she went on, "we must be very frank with each other, you

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know. Since you've paid me the very great honor of asking me to marry you there can be no secrets between us?"

"No," said Henry. "That is, I—"

She silenced him with a gesture. "In the first place, Henry, suppose you did leave college now, could you support me?"

His face flushed crimson, and for the first time he saw himself in the garish light of reason. The commercial side of love had never entered his calculations, and it shocked him inexpressibly. "My — my father —"

"Truly," said Miss Adams. "How could you? Of course you could n't rely on your father; that would n't be honorable — or manly. Is there anything you can do?" He shook his head and essayed to speak. "And to be very practical — as we must be," Miss Adams persisted, although her heart sank when she saw the set of his mouth, "I don't suppose you — have resources of your own."

"No, I—"

"And if we waited until you take your degree — that's nearly four years — either

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of us might find some one we truly loved better, might n't we? And that would be tragic, would n't it?"

"Never," said Henry huskily, although he dimly felt that she was speaking the sordid truth. "Never!" His castle could not endure to be remodeled as a cottage.

"And finally, Henry, there's one thing you must know; I don't think you know it yet. You're — how old?"

"Eighteen."

"Eighteen, Henry? And do you know how old I am?" He shook his head.

"My dear boy, I'm twenty — eight — years — old."

"It does n't matter," said Henry chokily.

"No? Think ahead a little. When you're twenty I shall be thirty. When you're twenty-five I shall be thirty-five; think of twenty-five, Henry, and add a decade to it for me. Do you think you should like it?" If he had been a little younger he would have wept; if he had been a few years older he would have cursed. As it was he grew redder, and his eyes sank

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lower and lower until they were studying the tips of her shoes. "For your sake, Henry — I assure you it's for your sake — I'm going to answer you to-night. Some day, I hope, when the right girl comes into your life, you'll bless me for it. My answer, Henry — and I hope you can take it smiling — is, 'No.' I shall always remember how dear and manly you've been, and I'm sure that no girl could have a more tender lover. When you come to see me after this — I hope you will come — I'll try to be the best friend you ever had; and I'm proud and happy to tell you that for just what you are and not for what you want to be — I truly love you."

"It was too much to expect," said Henry, still studying the tips of her shoes. "I don't know exactly what to say; I never had this to say before."

Miss Adams laughed; but such a sweet and understanding laugh that Henry was constrained to raise his eyes. "Can you forget it — and be friends?"

He blushed painfully; she should have

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known that he was too young to forget easily, and too old not to need friends. He got to his feet and hesitated. "I guess I've made a fool of myself," said Henry bitterly. "You were laughing at me all the time. I guess my old school principal was right; he called me a 'bonehead.'"

"Henry!"

"I'm sorry; I apologize. I will — see you again. I don't think I could stay away — even now. Thank you for telling me, Alice; you made it as easy as you could. Sometime I — Good-night, Alice."

He was turning away when she reached his side and captured both his hands. "Good-night, Henry," she said. "There's only one way I can appreciate the compliment you've paid me."

She kissed him once — twice; and in her kisses Henry felt the paralyzing consciousness that she was carrying her books to High School when he was wearing kilts, and that in her lips was the friendly regard that she felt for the neighbor's baby.

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IT was midnight before he reached his dormitory, and he did not know where he had been. Through his brain seethed the passionate thought that he had made a fool of himself! She was twenty-eight. She thought him a small boy; and in comparison to her he was. Marriage! His cheeks flamed anew in the darkness, and he loathed his passion and the sentiment that inspired it. And toward the end, when he turned his steps toward his room, his sense of humor crept insidiously into the case, and under a sputtering arc light he stood stock still and laughed hysterically to the twinkling stars. She had kissed him — as she would kiss the neighbor's baby! If she had truly cared for him she could n't have kissed him in that way. And — he stopped again at the revelation — if he had truly loved her, loved her as he had fancied he loved her, he would have perished in an agony of bliss at her touch. He recalled with another burst of self-abasing laughter that he had been ashamed and tried to wriggle away.

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It was with a tormented mind that Henry went to bed, and when he awoke once or twice in the early morning it was with a rush of accumulated shame mixed less violently with the pangs of unrequited love. At nine he breakfasted at "Jimmie's" on cereal, eggs, toast, buckwheat cakes and coffee; and afterward he smoked a huge cigar with some pleasure. The day passed slowly, and the next. Alternately he adored Miss Adams and patronized her in his thoughts. He kept away from his associates, but within the week he began to see that a man is no less a man for a futile affection, and that a girl is no less human for having been born ten years too soon. Occasional flashes of shame still enveloped him, but eventually he wrote a letter to Roberta, hinting that he suffered terribly from something far beyond her power of imagination and announcing that he had found a girl who was a pretty good sort of chum, and that he hoped to see a good deal of her during the next few years.

On the sixth day he packed his suitcase with a few necessities, and requisitioned a

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key from the master of the lockers on Soldiers' Field; so that when the first installment of Freshmen baseball candidates trooped into quarters they found a prospective first baseman dressed to play, and looking as though he knew how.

They were nearly ready to adjourn to the cage, and the coach had come in to look over his lively charges, when the man dressing next to Henry—it was the pitcher—remarked that recently he had met a lady whose charms entitled her to the uncontested beauty championship of the world.

"Serious?" asked Henry.

The pitcher vouchsafed him a languishing glance and sighed heavily. "If I could get a good job," he murmured, "I'd—I'd leave college and marry her myself."

"Nix!" admonished Henry sagely. "Take it from me, boy, there's nothing in it! Marriage"—he made sure that no one was listening—"it's an exploded theory!"

"Hey, you!" said the coach. "Get a move on!"

"Yes, sir," said Henry happily.

CHAPTER III

NO SPEED FORWARD

THE young man, whose pained expression indicated that he was bored by the prescribed reading in Comparative Literature I, brightened suddenly. It would have been evident to the most diffident observer that he had stumbled upon a passage of considerable import, because Harvard Sophomores are not accustomed to brighten over their prescribed reading in that particular course. The young man, who had been impelled to elect Comparative Literature I because of his friendship for the professor's daughter and his sincere faith in the power of politics, smiled broadly and set himself to memorizing.

"'Modesty,' quoted Henry, 'is the lowest of the virtues, and a confession of the deficiency it indicates.'"

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His roommate, who was wavering between law and art as alternative careers, sat back in his swivel chair and compared his painstaking pen-and-ink copy with the Gibson original.

"There!" he stated. "I'll bet anything up to sixty cents you can't tell which is which!" He cocked his head at the original drawing, and breathlessly added four lines of cross-hatching to the copy. "The Wellesley lady who's lucky enough to get this object of art for her room," he said pleasantly, "probably can't look at Rembrandt again and keep her face straight. What were you saying, Henry? I was n't listening."

Henry sighed profoundly. "'Modesty,' he repeated, 'is the lowest of the virtues, and a confession of the deficiency it indicates.'"

"It's a good line," conceded Whitaker, removing a pair of bath-slippers from his desk drawer to make room for the completed drawing. "Who wrote it — you?"

The future magnate of the wire-fence trust carried his eyes to the coming Probate

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Judge of Cook County. "No," he said pityingly. "A lad named Hazlitt. Does it give you a thought?"

"Rather; it sounds like a motto on the Memory Gem calendar my aunt used to send me for Christmas. What does it mean?"

Henry tossed Hazlitt to the study table, and rummaged for a pipe. "Can't you understand plain English?"

"That is n't plain English" retorted Whitaker. "It's fancy. Remember I'm not a highbrow, like you; I'm only a simple little farmer from Chicago. If anybody talked like that out in Chicago we'd throw him in the lake. It is n't democratic. And, as man to man, I ask you again, what does it mean?"

"It explains," said Henry, "why you make a hit at Wellesley and I don't. It means that if you go around telling people what a poor specimen you really are they'll believe you, even if you did n't mean it."

"I don't see why you need to get personal," complained Whitaker. "I don't re-

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call telling anybody out at Wellesley I think I'm a poor specimen. Poor specimen of what?"

"It is n't personal at all," retorted Henry. "I'll give you an example. Suppose you take that silly drawing out to Wellesley next Saturday —"

"To-morrow," amended his roommate. "The least you can do is to stick to the facts, Henry."

"To-morrow, then. Suppose you wave it in front of that shadowy blonde from Kenosha, and she says it's good — please note that this is all imaginary on my part — what will *you* say?"

"I'll say she's a good critic," said Whitaker promptly. "As a matter of fact you can hardly tell which is wh —"

"Hold on! Suppose you shrank back and said: 'Oh, no! It's awfully poor stuff, but I thought you'd like it.'"

"I'd never say that," protested Whitaker.

"Of course not. That's exactly the point. If you pretended to be modest you'd really be admitting how inferior you are, and

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of course that would n't be complimentary to the girl."

"No danger," said Whitaker complacently. "She's 'daffy' over me. She thinks I'm a little Old Master, she does — even if I *am* fat."

"Anyway," said Henry, "you illustrate the point. In order to make 'm think you're clever you've got to think so yourself. I never thought of that until this Hazlitt fellow put it into my head. From now on, Whitaker, your little friend Henry is going to get into the game with both feet."

He reached to the table for a thick book, bound in blue, and opened it to the title page.

"What's that, Henry? More of this same LL.D. stuff?"

"No — automobile book."

"What?"

"The name of it," said Henry patiently, "is 'How to Run a Motor Car.'"

"No!"

"I'll bet on it," said Henry.

"But you can't run a motor car."

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"No? Perhaps that's why I got the book. Then again—I don't mind telling you in strict confidence—I've driven a little."

"How much?"

"More than once—don't bother me."

"When was the other time?"

Henry turned a page.

"Don't tell me," said Whitaker in a horrified whisper, "they let you try it three times!"

"Whitaker," said Henry dispassionately, "I wish you'd grown big enough to spank. As it is I'm ashamed to chastise you. I'm studying this book for a purpose. Any more questions you'd like to ask?"

"Oh, yes. I'm through with my work."

"I know a girl," said Henry, "who has a car. She can't drive it herself, so we have to take the chauffeur. He's a Swede, but he understands fluently. Do you get it?"

"Not entirely. Proceed."

"I have a hunch she may ask me to drive

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some time. If so I want to be prepared. Yes," he mused, "she may ask me to drive, but, according to Hazlitt here I ought not to be so retiring. I ought to tell her I'm the original and only speed demon of Navarre — get her so saturated with the idea, that when I actually take the wheel she'll think I'm a four-star wonder, even if I run us into a ditch."

"You're joking."

"Not a bit of it. I've driven a bit. I got this book to brush up."

"I'll probably have to come out and brush you both up," Whitaker assured him. "Can you steer?"

"Easiest thing I do."

"Can you blow the horn?"

"I can learn."

"Well," said Whitaker piously, "the good die young, and they never come back. I don't doubt you can drive; you would n't be foolish enough to try it if you could n't; but could you tinker with the engine if it went wrong?"

"I'll tell you," said Henry in a burst of

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confidence, "how it is. I can start the thing, and stop it, and steer it, but if anything in the insides gets stale I'm ruined."

"Start it, and stop it, and steer it," pondered Whitaker. "Say, Henry, you know as much about a machine as I do about a wheelbarrow. Get away from that rocking-chair! What do *you* know about machinery? Henry, you're taking a dreadful risk."

"I know it."

"Suppose you broke down? She'll never love you again if she hears what your real conversation sounds like."

"Very likely."

"And if she ever sees you with grease on your chin she'll have Papa unchain the dog every night. Why don't you ask her out to walk—tell her the doctor ordered more exercise?"

"She would n't walk," said Henry. "Why, they've had the car only two months. Walk? Never again."

"If she ever finds out you're bluffing she'll never forgive you."

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“ ‘Modesty,’ ” quoted Henry, “ ‘is a confession of the deficiency it indicates.’ Keep still while I read this chapter on tire trouble.”

MISS DOROTHY HOLLINGSWORTH was not a Bostonian in the truest sense of the word. Her ancestors had missed the *Mayflower* by an eyelash, and, although they arrived on the next boat and talked convincingly of its superior accommodations, they naturally had never been included in the charmed circle of the first families. But it was rumored that in another decade or two the names of the younger Hollingsworths might be added to the roster of desirable citizens — the people one really knows — and that in such contingency Miss Hollingsworth would undoubtedly practise upon that inner circle the same diplomatic skill that she practised upon her own family. Society, they said, could stand it if the family could, for society would be aware of Miss Hollingsworth's presence only on second Tuesdays and

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fourth Thursdays, while the family got theirs every day in the week.

From her first sight of Henry of Navarre — Ohio — she had been mightily impressed with his personality. On that preliminary occasion, which was also semi-historical, he was engaged in impressing it upon some young gentlemen from Princeton, New Jersey, who essayed to play football in the Stadium. Subsequent to this proceeding he was presented to her at an undergraduate tea; and after she had met him again in town she permitted him to call, and never suspected that he borrowed the cutaway.

She was deeply interested in Henry, and she believed that he was one of the few men of his age not merely worth understanding, but also worth trying to understand. She was just old enough to need a mission in life, and Henry seemed to offer a more profitable field than the Sailors' Rest or the Newsboys' Home. In some measure he baffled her; his words were apparently serious, but underneath them ran a vein of levity that was disconcerting. Miss Doro-

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thy, having arrived at her twentieth birthday, knew that life is a very serious condition to be in, and she hoped that with her assistance Henry might come to know it too. This is not to imply that Miss Hollingsworth was unattractive or priggish; she was very healthily pretty and very normally vivacious, but she was twenty years old and she had spent every one of them in Boston.

When she had once formed the resolution to snatch Henry from the torment of self-sufficiency she found the problem more intricate than she had anticipated. Her chief perplexity was to eliminate the audience, for she saw clearly that only by the heart-to-heart interview could she succeed. The audience perversely declined to be eliminated. If Henry came to call, some one of the family was certain to fall prey to his good humor and sit out the evening with them, at times being hard put to it to refrain from laughing at Henry's jokes. If he came to tea, they were interrupted almost before they had shaken hands. When they motored there was the Swede.

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Miss Hollingsworth was a diplomat, and Henry, who had strangely taken to boasting on every conceivable subject, had professed an ardent desire to drive the car. Hence an unexpected half-holiday for the chauffeur; a tumultuous half hour of cogitation for Miss Dorothy; and a complete justification for the half-dollar which Henry had expended for his textbook at the second-hand shop.

He came punctually and handed her to the seat with great gallantry.

"You're sure you can drive it all right?" she inquired sweetly. "You know the snow is slippery."

"I can drive anything on four wheels," he assured her, letting in the clutch.

Even while his intelligence was busy with the mad rush of traffic on Beacon Street at three in the afternoon he was able to remember, with a grim smile of satisfaction, that Hazlitt had spoken and the prophecy was to be fulfilled.

"Why, this," said Henry brazenly, "is my idea of a cinch!"

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WHEN they were well out into the suburbs, where soft snow offered a better resistance to the chains, and Henry was able to dispense with the agonized expression, Miss Hollingsworth judged that he could afford to pay less attention to the motor and more to her.

"How well you do it," she complimented him. "I'm beginning to believe you can do everything, Henry."

"Maybe," said he, carefully steering to starboard to avoid a tin can a hundred yards ahead. "And then — maybe not."

"I often wonder what you'll do after you graduate. You have it in you to do big things."

Hazlitt might have said, "Of course I have," but Henry could n't force himself higher than "Maybe."

"Don't you know what you want to do?"

"Why," said Henry, with his eyes glued to the straight road along which they were speeding at fifteen miles an hour, "I've been thinking seriously I'd go into the

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North and South American Importing Company."

"Henry! I didn't know you thought seriously of anything!"

He slowed the car to a snail's pace and took a turn professionally. "They make gobs of money," he alleged. "Bill Simpkin's father is in it; Bill wants me to go in with him."

"What do they import?"

"Oh, I don't know; but there's money in it."

Miss Hollingsworth was deeply pained by his attitude toward fame. "Henry," she said, "I wish you saw things as they really are."

"They paid twelve per cent. last year," he insisted.

"That is n't what I mean. You see I'm ever so much interested in seeing you make the most of yourself. Honestly, I think you can do anything you try to do. You're splendidly thorough. When you began to play tennis you didn't simply want to play well, you wanted to be a champion. You

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felt the same way about football. Somebody told me you never kept up with your class until one of the professors said you could n't learn enough to get a degree if you stayed in college all your life; and then you went out and got four B's and an A. I imagine it was the same with motoring; when you took it up you mastered it. You know everything there is to know about a car; you've practically said so."

"Not quite everything," said Henry cautiously. She shivered slightly. "Are you cold, Dorothy?"

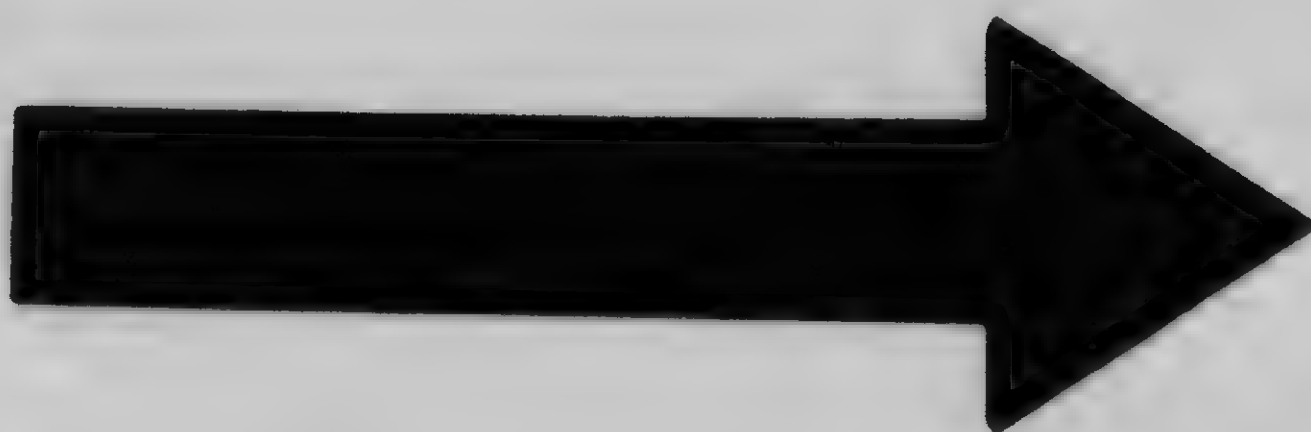
"Not enough to count. Henry, if you'd only go after the real things in life the way you've gone after football and tennis and motoring you could be famous!"

"Why, those *are* the real things just now."

"No; you take the real things too — humorously."

"Oh, no," he protested, noting with some alarm a faint pounding in one of the cylinders.

"Yes, you do. And I don't believe you



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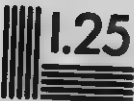
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can ever become the true man you ought to be until you settle down."

"All right," he agreed cheerfully. "I'll settle down just as soon as I can see something in it, Dorothy."

Miss Hollingsworth weighed the question before she propounded it. She felt that her duty was more important than her inclination, but she did n't want Henry to think she was forward. She stole a glance at him and nerved herself. "Henry," she said as softly as she deemed commensurate with the racing of a forty horse-power motor on low gear, "were you ever in love?"

"I certainly was," said Henry.

"How did you feel — toward life in general?"

"Well," he analyzed, "I felt like a prince for about two days, and then I felt like a fool for the next six months."

"Henry!"

"Yes?"

"Is n't *anything* — sacred to you?"

The nineteen-year-old philosopher shifted gears and grinned. "There is n't much

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sanctity in realizing you 've been a goat," he confessed. "I 'll have to admit I felt more like profanity. Why?"

Miss Hollingsworth played her last card. "Henry," she said, "you need the influence of women. You need some great, wonderful, mysterious motive to spur you on, to make you valuable to civilization. You can't go on in this slipshod fashion, making fun of everything. You 'll —"

"Just a second," he interrupted excitedly. "What's that?"

The engine coughed asthmatically, spat viciously, sighed a long sigh of utter resignation, and lapsed into a sulky silence.

"Stuck!" said Henry.

He found that the self-starter did n't self-start and that none of the shiny accessories on the dashboard had any influence. There was nothing to do but to get out into snow up to his shoetops and investigate the motor.

"Jiggle the spark," he commanded.

Miss Hollingsworth jiggled it ineffectually.

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"Tickle the gas," was his next order, and she tickled it without result.

Henry stood up and surveyed the landscape, which was unmarred by architecture. He seemed to remember having passed a farmhouse some three miles south, but he was not certain of it. There was no one in sight.

"You're not going to crawl under it, are you?" sympathized Miss Hollingsworth.

It was a happy thought, for he instantly remembered a number of cure-alls prescribed by his textbook.

"We'll be all right in half a second," he said.

His enthusiasm suffered a sudden relapse when he looked under the car. The snow was slushy and discolored by oil and grease. He wondered if after all the book had been authentic, and if he had spent too much time reading up on tire trouble and too little on the woes of ignition.

"Please hurry," said Miss Hollingsworth plaintively. "I'm cold."

"We're off!" he encouraged her, drop-

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ping to his knees and beginning to squirm under the car.

Miss Hollingsworth snuggled into her furs and shivered. The sun had disappeared and the predominating quality of the view was monotony. A chill East wind whipped smartly against her cheeks, and she leaned impatiently to one side to peer at Henry's feet, which appeared large and competent. She realized with a little flutter of pleasure that this strong, capable young creature had been put into her hands by Fate to make or mar as she willed. She intended to reform him; to replace his youthful buffoonery with mature poise only lightly adulterated with humor; to teach him to relinquish the boyish traits which are of no practical use in Boston society; and then some day, when he had succeeded in amalgamating her purposeful doctrines with his own mastery of detail, she might —

The feet moved convulsively! Henry, following the excellent method of progress exemplified by the inch-worm, emerged slowly and scrambled to his feet. His coat

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was matted with wet snow; his hands and face ran black little streams of grime; his nose was decorated with a single blotch of axle grease — single, but comprehensive; and his trousers hung limp and dejected about his knees.

"Dorothy," he said, "are you a good sport?"

"Why," she gasped, "what's the matter?"

Henry rubbed his variegated countenance with a muddy sleeve. "I regret to report," he reported, "that we're stranded on a desert island. That engine has eight separate and distinct things the matter with it."

"Will it take long to fix them? I'm so cold!"

"Fix them!" echoed Henry the omnipotent. "Why, my dear girl, I don't even know what they are!"

FOR a moment they stared at each other in silence.

"What shall we do?" begged Miss Hol-

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lingsworth tearfully. "Oh, Henry, what shall we do?"

"It's back to the farm for ours," he said. "They must keep horses or hens or something; they can tow us home. It's only three or four miles back. Would you rather wait for me here or —"

"You mean you can't fix it?"

"I mean I can't."

"You *can't*?"

"Right-o," said Henry. "Do you want to wait?"

"I could n't stay alone," she shuddered. "Oh, Henry, I'm *so* cold — and disappointed."

"You'd better forget the disappointment," he advised. "We'll have all we can do to be cold. We'd better trot right along. Hop out, Dorothy."

She stepped gingerly into the road.

"Is n't there anything you can do to make it go?"

He shook his head. "It'll stand all right until we come back with a team. Nice thing about a motor: it won't get scared and

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run away if you leave it. Now we 'd better walk along or you 'll catch cold."

Miss Hollingsworth took an uncertain step forward. "Ow! It's freezing! I can't walk in this, Henry."

"You 've got to walk," he said. "It's going to be still colder, and I would n't let you stay here now if you wanted to."

He took her arm and helped her a dozen steps. In his heart there was a great longing for the girls of his boyhood — the girls of Navarre, who were n't hothouse products, who knew how to meet adversity halfway and season it with a sense of humor. Incomprehensible to a Bostonian — they sometimes set out deliberately to walk in the snow, and had the vulgarity to think it was fun!

"If I 'd only *known* you could n't mend an engine, Henry!" she said tremulously. "I thought you could do anything!"

"'Modesty,'" he quoted, "'is the lowest of the virtues, and a confession of the deficiency it indicates.' Did you ever read Hazlitt? If you have n't — don't."

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"Don't be funny any more — please!"

"Right-o," said Henry, recollecting that she was n't to blame for her education.

A few yards farther Miss Hollingsworth stumbled.

"We'll have to pike right along," said Henry casually. "We won't get there until Memorial Day at this rate. Excuse me."

He put his arm around her and quickened the pace.

"You m-must n't," said Miss Hollingsworth. "You *must* n't, Henry!"

"Hit it up, Dorothy. You'll catch cold."

"But it is n't right!"

"Now see here, we're starting behind scratch now! Either I'll get you to that farmhouse any way I see fit, or you'll have to freeze comfortably and conventionally out here in this rural boulevard. This is n't any Sunday-school picnic, Dorothy; all the rules are suspended. Come on!"

"But I never permitted any one — it belongs to the man — I might some time —"

"Never mind the rest of it," said Henry. "I know it by heart." He held her closely

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and forced her into step with him. "Double time — March!" said Henry. "'Hay foot, straw foot, hay foot, straw foot!'"

"Please let me go!" implored Miss Hollingsworth. "You are n't serious; it is n't right!"

Henry stopped in his tracks and regarded her sorrowfully. Her face was pinched and faintly blue; her hands trembled, and her entire appearance bespoke intense frigidity, both mental and physical. Unassisted she could travel at approximately one mile an hour. The wind was rising and the temperature had begun to flirt dangerously with the zero mark. Henry was a powerful man, but he knew that he could n't carry Miss Dorothy three miles through deep snow. It was imperative that he arouse her by stringent methods, and he reasoned correctly that her chief characteristic was a stern and Puritan pride.

"Dorothy," he said calmly, "if you're not out of this weather in a very short time you'll catch pneumonia."

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"But it is n't —"

"No; in Boston I suppose you'd rather get run over by a truck than ask a stranger to help you across the street. Well, I come from Navarre, Ohio. Out there they taught me to get a woman out of trouble by the quickest method — and apologize afterward. So — we'll go on as before, and every time you lose a step I'll kiss you. Forward — March!"

"Why," she gasped. "You brute!"

"Coward," he recommended. "Coward's much better. Now you're doing nicely; keep it up!"

"You would n't dare!"

"You're not going to stop, are you?"

"No," she said agitatedly, doing her best to keep up with him. "No, I'm not."

"Naturally — under the conditions — it would n't be unalloyed bliss for me, Dorothy — but I'm willing to sacrifice all those sacred emotions for your sake. Can't you go just a little faster?"

They traversed a mile at a very creditable rate. Miss Hollingsworth's anger subsided

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measurably as she felt the biting wind grow keener, and as she sensed the utilitarian value of Henry's arm. Furthermore, she had taken great care not to merit the penalty in certain cases made and provided for, and she was relieved to find that Henry was as unconcerned as though he had not offered her the deadly insult. Then a tremendous wave of gratitude swept over her; truly she was cold enough already; at her own dainty pace she would have resembled a cold-storage chicken by this time. Does n't the end justify the means?

"Henry."

"Here!"

"I can forgive you now, Henry."

"Thanks — don't stop!"

"Yes," she repeated, accelerating her speed astonishingly. "I've been thinking."

"Good work."

"I've been thinking that perhaps it's just as well you are n't serious, Henry."

"I admit it."

"If you'd been serious I don't know what we should have done. Either I'd be

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congealing in the tonneau or we'd be struggling along all night. I'm glad you have n't — flirted with me, Henry."

"What! Why, I've done the best I could!"

"No; that's why I forgive you."

"Dorothy," he said, "you'd be a mighty good pal if you'd only let your heart take a fall out of your intellect every once in a while."

"Why, what can you mean?"

"You're too serious. You act as though the whole of Essex County was looking at you every time you sneeze. I don't believe you ever did a spontaneous thing in your life. Forgive me? I took the simplest method I could think of to make you hustle. I'd have dragged you along by the neck if I'd thought it would bring the same result. Why don't you act like a girl instead of a grandmother now and then? We'd all like you a lot better."

Miss Hollingsworth forgot that she had planned the afternoon for the express mission of converting him to seriousness.

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"Would you?" she faltered. "I should n't think you'd have any respect for me."

"Dorothy," he returned, "the height of my ambition is to hear you say something silly — just once."

She pondered gravely. "I don't think I ever said anything silly."

"That's the fault of your bringing up," he conceded generously. "You'll learn."

The girl from Boston looked curiously into the face of the Sophomore from Navarre. She was just beginning to see that under his levity ran a vein of seriousness that she had never suspected, and that it was all the more sincere because it was not assumed; it was an integral part of him, but its expression was hidden behind the vocabulary of his age and class.

"There's the farmhouse!" he cried. "And see! there's a stable! We can hire a horse to tow us home; you can get warm while I go back for the car. Let's sprint for the finish, Dorothy!"

As he withdrew his arm Miss Hollings-

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worth shed twenty years of her untimely maturity, leaving herself the twenty that she really owned. "Oh!" she said. "So soon? I'm sorry; I was enjoying it, Henry."

"You *were*?"

"Why, yes; you see, we're not so awfully old yet, are we. You've told me more than you know this afternoon. I'm wondering if I've — missed anything."

IT was ten o'clock when Henry strode majestically into his study and dropped into a chair before the fire. He breathed stentoriously and wearily, but with the satisfaction of one who has run a good race and does not expect an early breakfast the following morning.

Whitaker glanced up from the copy of a Whistler etching he was making for a friend in Vassar, and smiled. "It must have been some ride," he observed genially.

"It was," said Henry.

"Enjoy yourself?"

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"Could n't have been better. Say, Whitaker, *am* I too fresh?"

His roommate scrutinized him closely. "I don't know," he compromised. "I was n't there."

"I mean," explained Henry, "do I take things too flippantly? I'm serious now, you know; I'm as serious as a tea at Phillips Brooks' House; but what I want to know is, am I too funny?"

"I would n't have guessed it if you had n't told me. Say, is n't this a bird of a sketch. You can hardly tell —"

"I could do better with a shoebrush," praised Henry, "but it's not bad at that. Well, my boy, I'm for the solemn life from now on. This 'rah-rah' business does n't get you anywhere. To make good in the world you've got to cut out the comedy, and I'm going to do it. Under the influence of woman —"

"You've been reading a book," accused Whitaker.

"And how can I settle down and be famous unless I'm more mature?"

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"Modesty," said Whitaker, "is the lowest of the virtues. By-the-way, how did the car run?"

"And we've agreed that she ought to brighten up and I ought to sober up."

"Henry! You didn't do anything rash?"

"No, but I've found a girl who's going to show me how to make the most of myself."

"You're gone," said Whitaker compassionately. "That's the first stage. You're gone, old boy!"

"No — seriously," said Henry, selecting two books from the table and fingering them earnestly, "I'm going to quit bluffing — and I can't take the car out again. Her dad says it can't run without the Swede; and he's right. It can't. Say, don't you want to buy these books, *Iazlitt's Essays* and *How to Run a Motor Car*? You can have them for fifteen cents apiece, two for a quarter. I'm tired of fiction!"

CHAPTER IV

BACK HOME AGAIN

UNTIL the summer of 1912 the society of Navarre, Ohio, consisted of three placid matrons, each completely surrounded by a circle of adherents who could n't for the life of them explain why they were there. On the fifth day of July, Henry Chalmers came back from college with an initialed sweater, a national reputation and an assortment of tinted shirts that could be duplicated only by mail from Chicago. Grateful to Henry for the deeds which had admitted the town to regular membership in the map of the republic — for no one east of the Alleghenies had heard of it until Henry made the "team" — Navarre promptly assembled all the Japanese lanterns and camp-chairs and pretty girls, and welcomed him home with a garden party

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on the lawn of the Methodist Church; a function composed largely of anecdotes of the guest of honor, of tremulous questions concerning the beauty of Boston girls, and of disconcerting reminiscences of the time when Henry wore knickerbockers and would n't eat his cereal.

Navarre dispersed that evening fully convinced that Henry was an ornament to the Nation as well as a feather in Fair Harvard's cap; and Henry went home remarking that he had n't seen so much lemonade in one place since he was a boy. All things considered, a pleasant time was reported as having been had by all (see *The Reporter-Democrat*, July 6, 1912, page 1); and for the remainder of the summer the society of Navarre, Ohio, consisted of Henry Chalmers, entirely surrounded by concentric circles of young people who did n't care whether the placid matrons reported for duty or not.

It was expected — at least by the conservatives — that Henry would be bored by Navarre because it was so provincial; as a

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matter of fact he discovered that he was bored by an atmosphere he could n't analyze, but which was the net result of a desperate attempt to be metropolitan. The wire-fence factory had finally gone into the trust, and exalted some of the older families to such comparative wealth that they were rapidly learning to be smart and taking their smartness too seriously. The matrons had ceased to be "stylish" and strove to become "fashionable"; the Business Men's Association had graduated from open satisfaction in the Young Men's Christian Association to an honest-to-goodness club house with all modern conveniences, including a waiting list; and the girls — why, the girls already knew more about Fifth Avenue than do the majority of aspirants who live on Fourth Avenue; and they talked glibly of social obligations, the people one knows and the eligibility of Thomas, Richard, and Henry — especially Henry. Twenty-seven charming young ladies of assorted sizes, tastes and colorings hoped eagerly for the boon of Henry's companionship and the

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loan of the famous sweater for cool evenings; and there was no question at all that he could choose his partner out of the available supply and that, whoever she was, she would be "willin'."

Henry, after examining the qualifications of all the candidates, after marveling at their increased vocabularies and improved manners, put on a lilac negligee shirt that had never been worn before, and took Elsie Jones (unofficially designated as one hardly out of her cradle) to play tennis at the Country Club.

On his return he found his sister Roberta amazed and angry on the veranda.

"Well, my child," said Henry, luxuriously selecting a chair for himself and one more for his feet, "it's the same dead old town, what?"

Roberta glared speechlessly.

"I'm telling you," he continued, "it does a man good to get away from all that Boston society stuff and come back to the simple life. I had a whale of an afternoon!"

Roberta found her voice, which was preg-

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nant with indignation. "Henry Chalmers," she said, "I should think you'd be ashamed of yourself! The idea of your wasting a perfectly good Saturday afternoon on Elsie Jones! Why, she is n't even old enough to wear an evening gown!"

"She's making it now," said Henry. "She told me so. Say, did you know she plays a good game of tennis — for a girl?"

"She's making it, is she?" repeated Roberta. "Well, there's another point. Her father has oodles of money; the idea of her making any of her own clothes! But — Henry, have n't you *any* consideration for your family?"

"Yes," he admitted warily. "I have. Certainly. Why?"

"For two solid years," she upbraided him, "I've been telling everybody what a living wonder you are, and what a hit you made in Boston, and all that; and then you have the nerve to spend your first Saturday afternoon playing tennis with that Jones infant! And I had a nice party all arranged for you! I don't think it was decent."

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"Party?" he inquired with great mildness.

"Yes, party. I had six girls and six men coming over for high tea —"

"I did n't get it?"

"For 'high tea,' I said, and then you went and —"

"Oh, well," said Henry, "you don't need to feel that way about it. We can have tea any time. Besides, you ought to have told me about it. Who were the girls?"

"Wonders," said Roberta, "the best in town. There was Lucille Patterson —"

"Who? Not little Lucy Patterson?"

"Lucille," she corrected, "for nearly a year. Then there were the Bates twins —"

"Too gaudy," said Henry. "I saw 'em at the last party; they looked like a couple of lithographs."

"Their gowns came from New York," she retorted. "You don't need to insult my friends, Henry, anyway. Then there was Grace Field —"

"Too lippy; she told me she cut my pic-

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ture out of the paper and pasted it on her mirror. I told her I'd send her a pair of football shoes to paste with it, and she wanted to know if it was a promise. Go ahead."

"She thinks you're splendid; you should n't be so sarcastic, Henry. Then I asked Dorothy Camp—"

"Tall girl with freckles?"

"She is n't responsible for her freckles," said Roberta, casually passing a hand over her neck. "The sixth girl was—let me see—Gertrude Vance."

Henry lowered his feet to the floor and sat upright. "Gertrude Vance—who had the phonograph and kept rabbits?"

"Yes; of course you remember her."

"I do—unpleasantly. She let the rabbits into Dad's lettuce patch, and he thought I did it. I remember *her* all right."

"And," said Roberta sorrowfully, "after I'd asked all the nicest girls in town to meet you socially you went off to play tennis with a mere baby. I was so mad I could have cried."

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"But — for a girl — she plays a corking game —"

Roberta pondered diligently. "Naturally I don't want to criticize your taste," she said; "but Dad's spent a lot of money on your education, and it seems to me you owe it to the family to live up to your reputation."

"What reputation?"

She eyed him to see if he were modest or only stubborn. "Now, look here, Henry," she said, "just because Boston is a little bigger and a little busier than Navarre you don't want to think we don't know what's what, because we do. When you're a hero you've got to act like a hero. Every one expects you to dominate society this summer — and you'll have to do it, that's all."

"All right," agreed Henry wearily. "Anything to keep peace in the family. I can stand it if you can. How do I start?"

"In the first place," said Roberta, "you can't fritter away any more Saturday afternoons playing tennis with a mere —"

"Infant — was that what you were going

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to say? I don't believe you ever saw her play, Roberta. She's awfully good for a girl —"

"That does n't matter — stupid! You owe it to Mother and me to show some dignity."

"Dignity — piffle!" said Henry. "I came home for a vacation."

"Henry," she sighed, "I used to think you had some sense. Here you've gone and got yourself in all the papers and some of the magazines — and you won't see your responsibilities. Why, Mother and I can't hold up our heads anywhere unless you behave yourself. You're a *man* now, Henry, and you can't disgrace us after all these years. You don't seem to realize your social obligations."

"Go on," said Henry passively. "What do you want me to do — buy a silk hat and call on the minister's wife?"

"Not necessarily; but you've got to mingle with the right kind of people."

"Bring on your highbrows," he said resignedly. "I'll talk Greek to 'em — all I

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know, and it won't take long at that.
'Little boy, what do you study?'

"If you'll be serious for five minutes," begged Roberta, "I'll tell you what Mother and I have planned."

"That's close to my limit, but I'll try."

"Well in the mornings you can do almost anything you like."

"Thanks," said Henry. "Much obliged for the mornings."

"In the afternoons," stated Roberta, "we generally have teas and receptions and things; and when there's nothing else to do you ought to go walking or driving with some nice girl."

"Fine," said Henry without enthusiasm.
"Have you got a calendar upstairs?"

"In the evenings," she continued inexorably, "there'll be a lot of parties and dances in town and at the club. You ought not to miss a single event, Henry; you know you won't always be a hero. We're proud of you, but we'll have to show you off while the showing is good."

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"Great!" said Henry. "Do I get Sundays off?"

"No; people would notice if you didn't go to all three services. And, Henry — haven't you at least one white shirt you can wear on Sundays?"

"I'll get one," he promised. "This sounds like the chorus of one of those 'Free from care and despair, what care we?' songs. And because I made the 'team' last season I've got to be on exhibition all summer, have I? When do you think I'm going to wear out those old clothes?"

"And Monday night," said Roberta, "we're all going to a picnic at Glacier Rock. We leave at four —"

"But I've made a date," protested Henry.

"Break it!" commanded Roberta grimly.

"You may have done well enough in Boston, Henry, but you have to walk a chalk mark if you expect to stand anywhere in Navarre, I can tell you."

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TOWARD the end of the second week Henry arrayed himself in his best white flannels and a lavender tie, and set out to call upon his old friend, Mrs. George Graham. He went with some embarrassment, because three years ago Mrs. Graham had allowed him to carry her books to the Academy for her and now she possessed a frisky little daughter with six teeth.

"Hello, Helen!" said the collegian.

"Gee! It's good to see you again."

"I thought you'd never come to see me," she reproached, introducing him to the living-room. "I'm sorr, the baby's asleep — and George is out. He'll be sorry to miss you. He's at a meeting of the Advertising Men's Club."

"Advertising!" said Henry. "How long since?"

"Six months. Did n't you know how fast we're progressing?" She indicated a red velours divan, and Henry, heedless of the color effect, sat down. "Now," said Mrs. Graham, "tell me all about college — every-

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thing. Isn't it wonderful to play on the football team? Do you ever get hurt? How do you like the Country Club?"

"It's bully," said Henry briefly.

"It's been a wonderful addition to the life of Navarre," said Mrs. Graham.

"Would n't it have been jolly if we'd had it when you were here? You've tried the courts, I know."

"How do you know?" he demanded; and she laughed.

"It seemed so odd to us," she explained, "for you — with all your glory — to come home for the first time and spend your first Saturday afternoon playing tennis with Elsie, when so many of the older girls were so crazy to play with you. It was quite a triumph for the little Jones girl, Henry."

"I had a good time," he said. "She — she plays a pretty swift game — for a girl."

"Yes — I know. What a good time we always had together, did n't we? Will you ever forget that coasting club?"

"Is it still going?"

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"Oh, no," said Mrs. Graham. "There's so much else. I don't suppose you've been on a toboggan either since that last year?"

"Plenty of times," said Henry.

Mrs. Graham raised her eyebrows slightly.

"It's fairly popular in Boston," said Henry; "that is, in the winter-time."

"I don't know why it is," she commented, "but we don't do it any more. Everything has changed; there are so many more things to do."

Henry looked at her soberly. "Yes," he said. "In about nineteen years more you'll be forty, won't you? Helen, what's happened to Navarre? What's happened to Roberta? What's happened to you? It doesn't feel like the same town."

"It is n't," said Mrs. Graham promptly. "We have nearly ten thousand population now; twice what it was three years ago."

"But the newcomers are mostly in the wire works and the plow factory and the underwear mills, are n't they?"

"That does n't make any difference," she

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asserted. "The more population there is the more circumspect we have to be."

"Circumspect!" said Henry. "I guess I'm in the wrong pew, Helen. I can be as circumspect as I want to be in Boston, out here I want to walk on the grass." He rose and offered his hand to the favorite playmate of his schooldays. "Take care of yourself, Helen."

"I'm so sorry the baby's asleep," she told him. "Remember me very kindly to your mother, won't you?"

Three minutes later Henry delivered the message verbatim. "Helen's changed more than anybody else," he added. "Why, it was almost as dull as a formal call — and she used to be such a good sport."

"Henry!" said his mother. "The poor girl was probably tired out; this was her day at home; and that reminds me that you should have called this afternoon instead of this evening, Henry."

The young man who was known by sight to all the best butlers in the Back Bay shook his head solemnly.

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"What must she have thought of me?" he asked sardonically. "I did n't wear my gloves."

"Oh, that's all right," called Roberta from the adjoining room. "There's no need of formality between old friends like you and Helen."

Henry stared, laughed feebly, and sought the seclusion of his own room.

"Zowie!" said the All-American right tackle, unfastening his lavender tie. "I guess I'll have to take lessons!" His eye fell upon his tennis racket in the corner and he brightened suddenly. "Me for the Jones infant to-morrow P. M.," said Henry resolutely.

BY the first week in August there were at least a dozen lavender shirts and a dozen lilac ties to be observed on Navarre's approved promenade along Main Street from the railroad station to the Farmers' and Drovers' National Bank. Ranged alongside the sepia print of Henry in the photog-

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rapher's cabinet by the Busy Corner entrance were eleven similar photographs of young men with rebellious pompadours and far-seeing eyes.

More than one waistcoat in town was shorn of its lowest button in imitation of the prevailing style of Harvard Square, and more than one pliable cane had been forgotten and deserted at the soda fountain by gilded youth too little accustomed to the use of the swagger stick. Henry was dominating society according to the nomination in the bond; but, in spite of Roberta's alternation of low moans of anguish and high-keyed invective, Henry declined to be dominated by Roberta.

Whenever a fit of depression or a violent itch for exercise came upon him he telephoned over to Elsie Jones, and started for the tennis courts; and when he returned he generally bragged how she had reached the rendezvous before he had. This was to scarify Roberta, who was regularly twenty minutes behind time all day, but it was not effective. Roberta claimed that eagerness

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to meet an appointment is the hallmark of inexperience.

To Roberta's greatest astonishment the feminine half of Navarre didn't lose interest in Henry because he insisted on associating with the Jones infant. His independence served only to whet their longing to bask in the sunshine of Henry's expansive grin; and his attentions to Miss Jones caused each of them to grit her teeth and redouble her efforts to pry an extra cross-country walk out of Henry or to play one more accompaniment for his tenor solos — and to play it louder — than the next girl.

"The fact is," said Henry truthfully, "every girl in town except Elsie Jones thinks she's the Queen of the May, Mother. That Jones infant does n't know enough to be silly; she's the only unspoiled peach in the whole crop, and I'm proud of her."

"Unspoiled!" said Roberta. "You're spoiling her yourself. You don't think any girl could have the attention she's having and not be spoiled, do you?"

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"The attention I pay to her is entirely platonic," said Henry stiffly.

"You? Who's talking about you? Every man in town began to run after that child just because you did. I told you to be careful, Henry; she was a simple little girl until you started to flirt with her."

"I haven't flirted with her," retorted Henry. "The reason I like her so much is because she is n't always springing these 'Henry, confide in me, were you ever in love?' things. I would n't flirt with her on a bet."

"People think you're flirting with her."

"Let 'em think so then; it does n't hurt me and it may keep 'em from thinking something worse."

"Well, she's spoiled all right, or she soon will be. Do you know that she can't keep awake long enough to fill all her tennis dates? Her mother told me this morning that she had seven invitations for this afternoon."

"That's nothing," said Henry. "She told me herself she had eight."

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"And do you know what she's doing? She's making a *tennis costume*! And she used to play in a shirtwaist and a linen skirt!"

"Well," parried Henry after a dynamic pause, "I'll bet my hat she makes a good one anyhow."

"Furthermore," said Roberta, turning her eyes to the lawn, "you're a fearfully stupid boy in some ways, Henry. You have n't any more perspicacity than an ox. The first thing you know that child will fall in love with you."

"Not a chance!"

"Well," said Roberta, bringing her eyes back to her brother, "her mother says she isn't eating so much as she did, and she goes moping around all day; and when you ask her to play with you she bubbles around like a seidlitz powder, and breaks a shoestring trying to beat you to the club."

"That is n't love," explained Henry. "She's reducing. I told her she was getting too — rotund."

"No, that does n't explain her moping,

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Henry. When a girl's trying to bant she's happy all the time — in public. You want to look out; you don't know what a heart-breaker you are. Elsie is n't the only one. There are others."

"No!" said Henry, staggered. "Impossible! Silly little things — who are they?"

"Oh, I can't tell you. I positively promised I would n't. Elsie Jones is enough. She's having all her dresses let down, and putting her hair up, and next week she's going to Cincinnati to buy new things. It's a clear case, Henry — I warn you."

"It's a clear case of tommyrot!" said Henry viciously. "I don't see why you won't let me alone. Every time I blink twice at a girl she thinks I'm wild about her. It's — it's fate, that's what it is — and I'm sick of it!"

"You should n't feel so badly," soothed Roberta. "She'll come to her senses very quickly after you've gone. And you've shown us all one thing, Henry — she's

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plenty old enough to go out a little more; so I think the older girls may ask her to places after this."

"Roberta," said Henry, "I'm not fooling; I'm serious. I'm tired of being called a ladies' man. I'm not, but I like girls. I don't like little girls to act like actresses. I like 'em to be young while they *are* young. The only excuse I have for buzzing around with Elsie Jones is that she's a real girl — a real *little* girl — she is n't more than seventeen, and she acts perfectly satisfied about it. If she begins to fluff up I'm mistaken in her. She's a real girl —"

"Henry, you must be frank with me. Elsie's heart must n't be trifled with. She is a real girl; but is that the only attachment you have for her?"

"Maybe not," he said apologetically. "You see, she certainly does play a star game of tennis — for a girl."

"Oh," said Roberta a little disappointedly. "Then you don't really — you don't really —"

"I don't what?"

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"Oh, nothing," said Roberta, rising. "I can see you don't."

TWO exterior considerations united to make the first annual banquet of the Country Club of Navarre a noteworthy occasion. The first was that Elsie Jones had hypnotized her father, who was treasurer of the wire-fence factory, into endowing her with a series of gowns at least five years in advance of her age and five months in advance of anything else in the county; and the second was that Henry Chalmers, who had steadfastly resisted all blandishments, was to return to Cambridge on the following day for early football practice. He arrived at the club with characteristic promptness, and pumped the hands of the patronesses with impartiality. The local magnates came in obviously painful collars, their wives in gowns so new that occasional basting-threads still clung to the seams. Henry met the parents respectfully and their daughters smilingly.

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At seven o'clock every one was there except the Jones family, but the banquet couldn't begin without the Joneses, for every one knew that Mr. Jones held the second mortgage on the club house. A quarter-past seven came, and the head waiter tiptoed out to the loggia and peered down the driveway, wondering if his initial effort was to be a failure. On the long road to town a headlight twinkled cheerily. The head waiter listened; across the meadows the siren of the Jones touring-car screamed reassuringly.

The head waiter walked stiffly to the captain of the dining-room and raised his hand. "They're coming," he said briskly. "Put on the soup!"

In the great hall of the club house a sudden stir agitated Navarre's three hundred and ninety-seven. Henry, conversing in the background with a former teacher at the Academy, pulled down his waistcoat and straightened his gray silk tie. A motor roared up the driveway and came to a stop, panting furiously. From the tonneau three

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persons descended leisurely and came through the hospitably open doors: First, Mr. Jones; second, Mrs. Jones, black satin, lace and diamonds; third, Miss Jones; and, as the local newspaper was liberally supported by the treasurer of the wire-fence factory, Miss Jones got a quarter of a column all to herself and deserved more than she got. Sartorially and socially Miss Jones had "arrived."

It was not until he was nervously attacking his *flet mignon* that Henry could look at her without wincing. The short-skirted little girl, who played a good game of tennis, had suddenly blossomed into the Duchess in the play. Her gown of shimmering yellow stuff was by all odds the most striking raiment in the dining-room; her hair was tumbled into a marvelous mass that lent to her face an expression of ennui which Henry instantly deprecated; and, since she was a woman in the making, she had made herself a young woman such as any college-bred man must recognize as a peer of society, a regent of Navarre, and the kind of girl one

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sees in the pictorial sections on Sunday. The other girls had gasped and glanced quickly at Henry. Henry ate his *filet mignon* and talked incoherent nonsense to whoever inclined an ear. Even in his depression he realized that the turn of the road had come, and, as Mr. Morgan had observed, you can't unscramble an egg.

When the funereal banquet was over some of the younger set danced in the hall, some of the elders went down to the billiard room, where they could play a comfortable game of pool without the encumbrance of coat-tails and all the women got together to compare fashion notes. Henry, escaping to cool his forehead on the lawn, paced the limits of the white pergola and tried to bring back a summer idyl that had gone the way of its four predecessors. On the fourth turn he nearly ran into the arms of Elsie Jones.

"Why, Henry!" she cried softly. "What are you doing out here?"

"Foolish Question Number 5674," he replied, struggling to regain the mood that he

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always associated with the Jones infant. "I'm — I'm —" His brain refused to work properly. "Nothing at all," he ended. "I'm walking."

"Was n't it a lovely banquet, Henry?"

"It was a pippin," he agreed. "Did you come out to walk?"

"Oh, no," said Miss Jones carelessly. "I'm tired — dressmakers at the house all the afternoon, refitting. It's terribly tiresome. Is n't there some place we can sit down?"

They found a stone bench carved with lions' heads, and sat down.

"Well," said Henry gloomily, "summer's over. Back to work."

"You've made it a lovely summer, Henry."

"Why me?" he inquired. "I did n't do anything."

"Of course you did. I never enjoyed myself so much in all my life."

"You must have enjoyed it, Elsie. I have n't seen you more than two or three times this last month. Every time I called

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you up you were out playing around with some one else. Do you realize we have n't been on the court since the second week in August?"

"Of course we have!"

"Not I — not once."

"It really might have been some one else," admitted Miss Jones. "But I'm sure I've played several times."

"I don't doubt it."

Henry inclined his head to the waltz in the club house; Navarre was still conservative in this respect, and it was a genuine waltz.

"Henry!" exclaimed the girl. "You're not — jealous, are you?"

"Not a bit," he said stoutly.

"Oh — you're not?"

"No. I'm a little disappointed to have you grow up so soon. I —"

"I could n't make mudpies *all* my life," she laughed. "I've had a beautiful time since you came home, Henry — and you helped a lot."

"I'm glad you think so," he said, recol-

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lecting how popular she had become since August.

"Yes, you have. Of course Navarre is pretty dead socially. Mother thinks she may take me East for part of the winter. Oh, Henry! That reminds me. Haven't you forgotten something?"

He recoiled hastily. "What?"

"My gown. Isn't it a stunner?"

"It's very pretty," said Henry. "It must have cost a lot." The waltz played itself out. "Elsie," said Henry of Navarre, "what do you suppose a man likes most in a girl?"

"What kind of man—you, for instance?"

"Yes," he conceded; "me, for instance."

"A great, strong, wonderful man like you," said the Jones infant, "a man with a college education and wads of money and a place on the big 'team'—why, he'd like—different things."

"Go on," he said. "Be specific."

Miss Jones clasped her hands and looked at the stars. She sat in half light, so that

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the maturity of her coiffure was startling. It had flattened considerably, but Miss Jones was blissfully ignorant of the catastrophe and thought only of her new position and her new gown. "Experience," she said, "and — affection — and a good game of golf or tennis, or something athletic — and knowing how to wear her clothes —"

"Elsie! Clothes! Could n't you have waited a little longer between the halves? Did you have to grow up all at once?"

It was a fatal error.

"Why, my dear Henry," she said surprisedly, "I'm seventeen years old. One gets tired —"

"One!"

Miss Jones stared pensively at the stars. "Well, then — I should think this man — whoever he is — would get tired of having girls stay little girls. I was awfully childish the first part of the summer, was n't I? We all have our social obligations, you know. Why, you're not going, are you?"

"Yes," said Henry, gazing at her gown

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more in sorrow than in admiration. "To tell the truth, I have to pack my trunk."

"But, Henry —"

"Take care of yourself," said the hero lightly. He took her hand, and held it between his for a dozen heart-beats. She thought he intended to kiss it, but he did n't. He was taking leave of the last of the little girls of Navarre. "Take care of yourself," repeated Henry soberly.

UNTIL the departure of his train for the East, Henry preserved a melancholy cast of countenance that distressed Roberta. She tried all the arts at her command to glean from him some crumb of information, but he insisted that he had no information to impart. Nothing had happened; nothing had offended him; nothing had alienated him; he said he was thinking how happy he had been. Roberta alleged that he did n't look happy; but he told her that if he had n't learned to be happy without grinning all the time he'd wasted a

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large amount of sleep in his philosophy courses.

As train time drew near Henry cheered up amazingly; and when, at the station, he found a large delegation of all three social strata to bid him farewell, he smiled forgivingly and stated with all due modesty that they could all go out and pledge their jewelry that Harvard would sweep all comers the same as last year. This was his swan song.

He was no longer a prominent athlete living on his record; he was a gladiator embarking for another bout. He was Henry Chalmers, all-American right tackle, a terror to opposing halfbacks, a dire foe to runners in the open field, enemy and arch-enemy to the opposite sex for evermore. This last conviction was not as obvious as the others.

From the observation platform of the last car he waved a mauve-bordered handkerchief to Navarre — to Roberta weeping copiously on her jabot; to his parents, moist-eyed but firm; to George Graham, a Yale man, generously flapping his hat; and to

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Elsie Jones, smartly tailored and exclusively confectioned — a butterfly fully winged, a member now of Our Set, a peer of society, who had n't understood, and never could understand, why he had stopped liking her. He waved in renunciation to Elsie Jones; and then went in and bought the most villainous cigar on the train.

"Hello, Henry," said the Pullman conductor, who had gone to the Navarre Academy and played a rattling game at second base, "going back to the big town? Pretty dull for you out here on the plains, was n't it?"

"Hello, Smith," said the hero. "No, it was n't dull."

"No! A good vacation?"

"Oh," said Henry sweetly, "you misunderstand me. I'm just starting on my vacation, Smith. Say, how soon can I eat?"

CHAPTER V

THE GIRL WHO REPEATED

AT the mature age of twenty-one years and two months Henry realized that at last he understood women. His ability to analyze feminine moods and tenses was, in a manner of speaking, a part of his college education; for although he was no Greek god of a man, and never would be, he was at least an all-American right tackle, which is fully as important in the opinion of the present republic; and because he had in turn made love to his seniors and been adored by the thin-legged, short-skirted sisters of his friends, he possessed that breadth of experience impossible to one who has not himself worshiped and alternately been adored in vain.

He came to his majority with a heart armored in triple bronze, a neck that was

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cruelly tortured by anything less than a size seventeen collar, and eyes that had learned to smile cynically when he stroked wedding announcements to test the engraving. It was solely from a sense of duty, therefore, that he accepted Mrs. Fessenden's invitation to her week-end house-party when he knew that four girls were to be among those present.

Mrs. Fessenden came out to the veranda just as Henry, somewhat dusty about the ears from the journey, alighted from the station-wagon.

"My dear boy!" she said affectionately. "I'm delighted to see you again! And how well you're looking!"

"Thank you," said Henry. "It's hot, isn't it?"

Mrs. Fessenden was startled, for she had not yet discovered his acute consciousness of woman's insincerity; and she had thrown a scarf over her shoulders when she went out to the veranda.

"You're to have Richard's room," she told him. "I'll have your things sent up

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at once. You'll make haste, like a good boy, won't you? Dinner's almost ready, and the girls are dying to meet you."

He thanked her with a pitying smile and went up to dress in Richard's room, where a genuine, imported London valet was awaiting him. Henry was still youthful enough to enjoy himself in evening clothes, and the enjoyment was lifted to rhapsody when the suit was laid out for him by a man with the correct English accent. Except in amateur dramatics he had never seen a valet until he arrived in Cambridge; and even now he was slightly awed by the presence of the man. It seemed appropriate and very delightful to slip a silver coin into his palm and say, "Thank you, James, that will do very nicely"; and for the valet to take his departure with a "Very well, sir. Thank you, sir," quite in accordance with all the tenets of private theatricals.

Henry's coat fitted him perfectly; his shirt bosom was gloriously unwrinkled, and his tie was irreproachably knotted; but he delayed before the mirror instead of de-

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scending the stairs immediately. In anticipation he could already hear the hackneyed praise of his exploits on the football field, the inevitable list of men in college whom some one else knew — and would n't it be too strange for anything if he also knew them? — and all the rest of the utterly superficial small talk which is the social prerogative of woman. Now that he understood them he knew that they were automatically putting him at his ease, and he loathed to be put at his ease. For the moment he wished that he had stayed in town for human companionship and as much tobacco as he liked; and then he remembered his duty to Mrs. Fessenden, saw that his cuffs were immaculate, brushed his hair smooth for the fourth time and went down to dinner.

His hostess waylaid him in the hallway. "Henry," she said in an undertone, "I'm terribly mortified. Will you help me out?"

"Of course I will," he promised. "What is it?"

"Well," said Mrs. Fessenden, "you'll

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simply have to outdo yourself. I don't know whether it's a joke or a philopena or a wager, but the very prettiest girl I asked to meet you is on a strike."

"Not a suffragette?" said Henry hoarsely. "Not a hunger strike?"

"Worse," she said helplessly. "It's a silence strike. I know it is n't meant to be unkind to me. From the way they're all laughing over it I'm sure it's a joke, and I think it may be to hoax you."

"Me?" he faltered. "Why me?"

"I don't know; but you're to take my little chatterbox, Alice Grosvenor, in to dinner; and she's pledged to utter not a single word to any one during the evening. Will you try to be nice to her just the same? I don't know what to make of it."

She seemed really embarrassed, and Henry was far from heartless. "Lead me to it," he reassured her, and rejoiced mightily that Fortune had been so kind. "I always humor the dear creatures," he said. "I should n't wonder if it would be rather clever of her." He laughed reminiscently.

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"We used to do silly things like that at parties when I was a boy."

"You've no conception of the relief," said Mrs. Fessenden. "But I knew you'd help me; you're so adaptable, Henry."

He was unflattered; but as he followed her to the drawing-room he was strongly prejudiced in favor of Miss Grosvenor. He resolved to surpass himself in chivalry, and he was confident that he would find his subject the most sensible girl of the lot. Within the next five minutes he was convinced of it.

None of the four girls had met Henry socially, but all of them lived within the generous radius of Harvard influence. They had seen photographs of him in the Sunday supplements, and sometimes they had watched him display on Soldiers' Field the facility in shifting his hundred and eighty pounds of muscle in the method which brought more newspaper publicity than his mother thought good for him. The two most fortunate girls had even seen his successful attempt to deter a Yale eleven from

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encroaching on that publicity in the subsequent day's headlines. They spoke brazenly of these things, and wearied him.

Only Miss Alice Grosvenor was silent, and she was the prettiest and most consistently pink little lady he had ever seen. As he strolled unconcernedly into the dining-room with her, acknowledging Mrs. Fessenden's grateful look with a confident bow, he was so contented with his lot that he almost pitied the three other young men who had no such silent partners. Miss Grosvenor, it may be inferred, was unusually attractive to the sage diagnostician of her sex; but he found no difficulty in assigning her a definite place in his cosmos. He understood her perfectly. She was intolerant of athletes.

"Miss Grosvenor," he began, under cover of the general gaiety, "won't you try an olive? Mrs. Fessenden tells me you're on a strike."

She nodded and smiled pleasantly.

"I hope you're not afraid of me," said Henry, perceiving that it is surprisingly easy

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to converse with a girl when there is no danger of repartee. "And I hope," he added swiftly, "that it is n't because you thought you would n't like me."

She shook her head; the table observed her, and laughed immoderately.

"You're doing splendidly, Alice," said Mrs. Fessenden. "What's the penalty if you lose?"

"Cigarette-cases and glove-boxes," explained one of the young men. "Personally I think we ought to give odds; it's against all precedent, and besides it's pretty hard on Mr. Chalmers."

"Do you really want to play it out?" inquired Henry of the pink-and-white girl, and she nodded assent.

"Do you want me to talk? Would it make it easier for you? No?" To his great satisfaction the conversation again became general, so that he was assured of privacy.

"All right," said Henry. "I know what you'd ask me anyway. First my name is Henry Chalmers — no relation to the

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Chalmers in Newport, New Rochelle, or Bangor. I'm in my last term at college and I like it. I don't know what I'm going to do after I graduate, but it's true that the average man does n't earn more than twelve dollars a week the first year. My home is in Navarre, Ohio, and I'm glad you can't say 'Oh, yes!' and look wise, because I know you never heard of it. And you don't know any one who comes from there, because nobody but me ever came."

Miss Grosvenor could n't say "Oh, yes!" but she managed to look very wise indeed, and they both laughed.

"To continue," he continued, "I've read some Bernard Shaw, but I don't get him. I like Montgomery and Stone, but I would n't go to the opera if I were paid for it. Oh—I forgot!—I don't dance. Is n't it extraordinary?"

She laughed so deliciously that he was further emboldened. After all it would be amusing to take her unawares and shatter her reserve. He resolved to try.

"Alice," he began.

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"I—I—" She stopped, but her expression was unmistakable.

"I won't beg your pardon," said Henry. "It was intentional, and I admire your courage."

He comprehended her forgiveness and her gesture.

"Yes, I like your gown too. It's a wonder, and you look awfully well in it. By-the-way, that remark of yours does n't count, of course. It was n't a 'word.'"

"Why, Henry," said Mrs. Fessenden, "are n't you eating your duck?"

"Immensely," he returned at random. "Oh, yes, it's excellent!"

He punctured it with his fork, allowed Miss Grosvenor to taste hers, and saw the plates removed without regret.

"See here," he said honestly, "if you can talk like that with your eyes I'm glad you are n't saying anything else to-night. I think you could pretty nearly disconcert me!"

Miss Grosvenor giggled and toyed with her salad.

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"One favor," he begged; "don't talk football. For three months I have a lot of coaches talking football into me, and the rest of the year I have everybody I meet trying to talk it out of me. Will you promise not to talk football — ever?"

She agreed tacitly, and proceeded to make havoc of her fancy ice.

"If you won't be offended," he whispered as they rose, "I'd say this was one of the nicest dinners I ever ate!"

That was practically his last speech of the evening to her, for the men remained for cigars and coffee and afterward wandered into the music-room for informal dancing. Henry, who thought himself too clumsy for the modern steps, sat out the program with Mrs Fessenden.

"Well," she asked him finally, "how did you like Alice?"

"Good!" said Henry.

"They've let me into the secret," said Mrs. Fessenden; "or rather, Alice has let me into it. It's queer I didn't think of it myself. I don't know when I've been so

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sorry for any one — and exactly as you said, Henry, it *was* clever of her!"

"What's the joke, Mrs. Fessenden?"

"Does n't she dance beautifully? Oh — why, I promised I would n't tell you until she's out of the way. Does n't that make you curious?"

"Frightfully," said Henry, pursuing Miss Grosvenor with eager eyes. "Can't you tell me now?"

"In just a moment, dear. That must be the last dance now. She says she'll talk to you to-morrow if you like. It was very sweet of the girls to support her so loyally, I thought. They have n't made it hard for her at all."

"Hard for her?" He caught a fraction of a smile from the pink-and-white lady. "Why on earth should they make it hard for her?"

"That is the last dance," said his hostess, rising. "Wait for me in the hall, Henry. It's the funniest little tragedy you could want to hear!"

"Good-night, Miss Grosvenor," said

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Henry, bowing over her hand. "I'm looking forward to a very pleasant to-morrow."

Her eyes were wide and frightened as she left him.

"Henry," said Mrs. Fessenden in the hall.

"Yes?"

"They've gone up, have n't they? Henry, I'm on the verge of tears; and yet it's funny, funny, funny! Do you know why that adorable little Grosvenor girl would n't talk to you?"

"I can't imagine."

"She was afraid you'd laugh at her. I don't suppose I need to say that no girl near Cambridge wants to be laughed at by Henry Chalmers?"

"Pooh!" said the football hero.

"She's heard a great deal about you from her cousin, Wilson Preston, in your class."

"I know him," said Henry.

"And she wanted you to know her a little better before she talked to you, so she very cleverly drew all the girls and boys into a foolish wager that she would n't speak a

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word during the evening. The truth of the matter is, Henry — she stutters."

"Ah!"

"You're not laughing?"

"I don't see anything to laugh at," said Henry soberly. "The poor little kid! Good-night, Mrs. Fessenden; thank you for telling me. The poor child! I'll try to make it up to her to-morrow — Oh, what time is breakfast?"

"Whenever you please, dear, on Sundays. We're all late sleepers but Alice; she comes down at eight. What are your pet habits?"

"I always eat around eight," said Henry ingenuously, "if it won't inconvenience you? Thank you, Mrs. Fessenden. Good-night."

In spite of the fact that Miss Grosvenor was smaller than most women he was still puzzling about her as he dignifiedly submitted to the ministrations of the genuine London valet. Could it be possible that in his search for truth in woman he had accidentally stumbled upon the complex?

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HENRY shaved loudly (he was in the throes of the Gilbert and Sullivan revivals) while the other guests were still slumbering peacefully toward the rising-bell. He interspersed snatches of football songs with arias from *Patience* and *Pinafore* and burst into a triumphant rendition of the *Wedding March* as he razored his square, young chin. A full ten minutes before the hour he bounded down the stairway and out to the lawn with all the abandon of a playful and immature bull moose in the springtime, and, as the grounds were deserted, he tried his matutinal energy with a broad jump over a bed of prize tulips.

"It's a peach of a day!" exclaimed the misogynist to the empty air.

"Isn't it?" queried a shy voice behind him.

Henry whirled his impressive bulk in the direction of the sound, and observed that he was not alone in the morning. Miss Grosvenor, pinker than ever as to complexion and hardly less so in raiment, was

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coming slowly over the grass to meet him.

"Why," he said surprisedly, "*you don't*" — he sensed the error, and essayed lamely to correct it — "*you don't do this every day, do you?*" he stammered. "I mean — so early?" Miss Grosvenor's face was averted, but Henry saw that the tip of her visible ear was three shades beyond pink.

"Let's walk," he suggested, leading the way to the great gates. "It's a wonderful morning for a walk — good for you, you know. I don't know when a walk has seemed more — the thing to do. And somehow on a morning like this I don't feel much like talking — do you?"

She thanked him with a rare smile, and fell into step as they reached the roadway. They had traversed nearly a mile before Miss Grosvenor faced the inevitable.

"Mr. Chalmers."

"Yes?"

"I don't always d-do it."

"Oh!" said Henry insufficiently.

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"You see, it's only when I'm excited or when I th-think about it."

"Don't let's think about it; it is n't necessary in the least."

"I'm quite all right now. You — you scared me at first."

"I'm sorry."

Her smile was so fleeting that he scarcely knew it had happened.

"Why should you have been excited last night?"

"Oh, I did n't know you th-then."

"And you do now?"

She nodded. "Better."

"It's a curious thing," said the man of twenty-one. "I don't believe I understand it."

"I was afraid of you," she acknowledged.

"Afraid of *me*?"

"Y-yes."

"You said you were n't!"

"Well, you did n't think I'd admit it, d-do you?"

"You admit it now," said the All-Ameri-

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can right tackle, baffled. "Why should you have been afraid of me?"

"Oh," she breathed, "why should I? I wonder if you ever met my dearest friend in Cambridge, Alice Adams?"

"What!" said Henry. The name brought vivid memories of the thoughtful maiden who had kindly rejected him in his Freshman year and taught him that women are soulless. He had never fully recovered. "Why, yes," he said. "I thought I was engaged to her once."

"You were!"

"No, I said 'I thought.' She could n't see me at all. So you're a friend of hers, then?"

"Ra-ther," said the small lady. "Is n't it odd?"

"Odder than that," he agreed. "No, she could n't see me at all. Thought I was too young, or something."

"The idea!" commented Miss Grosvenor. "She never told me about it."

Henry halted in his tracks. "Well, I should hope *not!*"

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"I'm to visit her next m-month," said Miss Grosvenor.

"Great! I'm on calling terms — fortunately."

"Is n't it fortunate?"

"Do you think so?"

She admired him with great modesty. "Y-yes, I do," said Miss Grosvenor. "Tell me, Mr. Chalmers, if you d-don't like to talk about football what d-do you like to talk about?"

"I think I'd like to talk about you," said the man who was wise. At a noticeable turn of the road Henry thought suddenly of his watch, and found that it had stopped. "I suppose we'd better go back," he regretted. "We must have been out fully fifteen minutes."

"I could g-go twice as far," she told him; but in deference to healthy appetites and the minor conventions they retraced their steps.

At the gate Miss Grosvenor laid an imploring hand on his arm. "If — if I ever s-stop talking suddenly and d-don't go on,

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you'll know why it is, won't you? I'd hate to have you l-laugh at me — and if I once begin, I s-sound like a s-siphon!"

"Trust me," said Henry.

On the veranda they found the remainder of the guests lolling comfortably.

"Hello!" cried the other guests. "Here they are! We finished breakfast twenty minutes ago! How's the walking?"

"Fair enough," said Henry genially. "Fair enough for us to try it again after breakfast."

HAMILTON JONES, who reveled in Henry's divan and accepted Henry's company as a necessary complement, looked up through the gray clouds of his best pipe and grinned sympathetically.

"Nice picture, Henry," he remarked, indicating the most recent addition to the furnishings of Henry's desk. "Who is she?"

"Best in the world," hesitated the owner of the room.

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"Oh, that's what they all say. Is she the only?"

"Maybe."

"Oh, they all are," sighed Hamilton Jones. "Well, I hope she knows how much you eat."

"Hammy," said Henry, "your dad hires a lot of graduates, does n't he?"

"Oh, yes," yawned the guest, "and a beastly inefficient lot they are too. You are n't looking for a job, are you?"

"I might. You see I could go to work for my father out in Navarre, but I don't believe in a son working for his father."

"Does he?"

"No, but that is n't the point. What does your dad pay to start?"

"Ten a week in the factory," said Jones. "Twelve in the office. You take your lunch in a pail and a bottle of cold coffee in your pocket. I did it all last summer."

"How soon does a man have a chance for advancement?"

"He always has it," declared Jones. "I began at ten dollars the last of June, and

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they raised me to eleven dollars the first of September."

"Stop your fooling," commanded Henry. "When would a man—like me, for instance—get up to three or four thousand a year?"

"Oh, you snob!" said Jones. "I suppose in ten or fifteen years; I don't know. Say, why don't you get some good tobacco? This stuff tastes like alfalfa."

"That's probably what it is. I wonder—do you suppose a man could live on, say, three thousand a year?"

"Yes," said Jones, winking broadly, "they could."

Henry smoked diligently with his eyes on his friend. "Sometimes," he reflected, "I wonder if a college education pays."

"Pays who? Pays the college?"

"No; pays the students."

"I don't know," said Jones, stifling another yawn. "But then, I never was a student. I'm a man of repose and deep thought."

"If I'd gone to work instead of coming

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here to play football," said Henry, "I'd be earning real money by this time. Why plumbers' apprentices get ten dollars a week!"

"Well, they're worth it!"

"I might have had a business of my own," mused Henry. "I could have had a little house with a limousine and a valet —"

"In Navarre?"

"Probably."

"Then you would n't have met her," said Jones. "You'd better take ten dollars a week and be thankful. Why, my dear boy" — he blew a cloud of smoke to the ceiling — "even I, who don't contemplate matrimony — I started at ten dollars a week. The first week I got seven."

"What?"

"Yes. There's a fine of fifty cents for lateness. I was late every day but Sunday. Shall I tell Dad you want to take the factory course this summer?"

"You said the beginners get twelve dollars in the office?"

"I did — and they do."

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"I think I'd better begin in the office," said Henry. "By-the-way, it's manufacturing ammonia, is n't it?"

"No," retorted Jones disgustedly. "That's Will Preston's father. Ours is tin cans."

"Oh, yes." He knocked the ashes out of his pipe and stretched himself before the mantel. "Put me down for the first of July, Hammy. College is nearly over. I'm educated! I've got to go out and make my way in the world."

"Believe me," said Jones, glancing at the photograph of Miss Grosvenor, "you've got some reason there, my boy!"

THE pink-and-white young lady, visiting Miss Adams in October for the second time that season, obligingly watered Miss Adams's garden with a two-inch hose while Miss Adams's Angora kitten sat among the asters and watched attentively.

Down the long street came a young man in blue flannels; a bulky young man who — any

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philosopher could have told you — was obviously not on his way to work. At the same time he did n't look as though he would shirk any task that confronted him. A close personal acquaintance with the routine of a canning factory had removed a large number of his prejudices against labor, and from distant Navarre his father had written proud letters to hint that in the near future he might have need for an intelligent young superintendent in the wire-fence factory. Altogether the college education seemed to have paid.

Henry was light-hearted and light-footed; he took the low boundary wall in his stride and came softly over the grass.

"What a beautiful day!" said Miss Grosvenor unemotionally to the Angora kitten.

"Is n't it?" asked a deep voice behind her.

Miss Grosvenor turned with a little scream, and deluged the indignant Angora from the suddenly deflected hose.

"N-now see what you made me d-do,"

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she reproved him. "You're always s-scar-ing me, Henry!"

"Three's a crowd anyway," said the son of toil, shaking hands with more than formal ceremony. "I got away a bit early, you notice."

"Y-yes."

"Because," said Henry, "to-day is what the Scandinavians used to call a triple triumph."

"W-was n't it the Romans, Henry?"

"Scandinavia is one of the provinces — suburbs," he explained gently. "The triple triumph is as follows: more salary, better job, half-holiday."

"Henry! Won't your f-father be pleased!"

"Thank you for the few kind words. Of course it pleases the old gentleman to have me make good all by myself." He chuckled boyishly. "Do you remember Hammy Jones? It's his father I'm working for. Well, I'm Hammy's boss now."

"You are? How funny!" She completed her gardening by spraying the asters

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— to the further discomfort of the Angora kitten.

"Yes," reflected Henry. "I think it's rather funny, but Hammy can't see it. He claims there's favoritism at work. Let's sit in the mausoleum."

Together they went up to the loggia and occupied the distant ends of a Gloucester hammock. The loggia was screened from the street by a hedge of bridal wreath.

"This is a pretty nice house," complimented Henry. "Somehow it always seemed too large for just the three Adamses though. I should think they'd prefer an apartment."

"Oh, no," protested Miss Grosvenor. "I don't like apartments at all!"

"Why not?"

"They're not nearly so nice as small houses, are they?"

"On the whole," he said, shifting his ground adroitly and accurately, "what could be nicer than that cottage down at the foot of Lake Street, for instance? It has a lawn, you remember, and plenty of flowers

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and it's near the car-line and among nice people."

"It's a d-darling cottage," said Miss Grosvenor. "It would be much nicer than an apartment."

"Also it's very inexpensive."

"Really? How d-do you know?"

"I can get it for fifty dollars a month. I call it a bargain," said Henry.

"But," quizzed Miss Grosvenor, "why should you want a cottage?"

Henry rose and looked down the pergola to the street; when he returned to the Gloucester hammock he took his seat much nearer the mathematical center.

"I don't want a house now," he explained, "but I expect to want one very much about the first of February."

"You do? Are n't you c-confident?"

"Yes. Mr. Jones told me this morning that, unless he's mistaken in me, he'll make me office-manager in January. That apparently carries a salary of two thousand. I think that's doing pretty well for the first year."

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"I should say it is! It's s-splendid!"

"It really is n't as fine as it sounds," he conceded. "The fellows in the office are n't so awfully bright, you know. These college men don't seem to be worth much in business. I would n't hire so many of them; at the same time, as I was saying, it's a good start. There's only one thing I'm uncertain about."

"What's that?"

"If two thousand will be enough."

"Enough for what?"

"For us," said Henry placidly.

Miss Grosvenor trembled violently.

"Why! — what do you m-mean, Henry?"

"Alice," he said, "I was brought up to spend just a little less than I have. I know you're used to everything you want. Two thousand is n't much, but some day there'll be more — and two thousand inside the first year is promising. As a matter of fact" — he hesitated — "my dad promised me a year's salary — whatever I happened to be getting at the time — when I'm married — as an extra gift. That would help a lot.

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Do you think you could manage on two thousand — to start?"

Miss Grosvenor, after an electric pause, nodded obliquely.

"I don't understand," said Henry.

"Y-yes," said Miss Grosvenor.

"Will you?"

"Y-yes," said Miss Grosvenor faintly.

For a long time afterward they sat silently in the Gloucester hammock. The loggia, it will be observed, was screened from the street by a hedge of bridal wreath.

"It was in this very house," said Henry breathlessly, "that Alice Adams showed me what a silly kid I was! Isn't it a coincidence that I found *you* here?"

"I'm so g-glad," whispered the girl. "I w-want you for myself, Henry!"

She turned suddenly away from him, and he saw that her shoulders were shaking.

"Alice!" he said. "I — I can't understand it! It seems too wonderful to be true! *How* can you care for me?"

She tried to speak to him, and although

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her words were muffled in the cushions he comprehended, and remembered the promise he had made to her long ago at Mrs. Fessenden's gates.

"Dear," he said tenderly, "*I* know! Please don't feel so badly about it!"

She shook her head.

"Alice!" He slipped his arm around her, and slowly brought her face to his.

"Alice, I love it so much that I want you to be with me always. Is n't that proof enough that I don't mind?"

"D-don't laugh at m-me!"

"Never!" said Henry.

"I w-want to t-tell you —"

"Tell me!" he insisted.

She put her arms around his neck and kissed him fearfully. "I l-l-love you, H-Henry!"

"Say it again!" said Henry joyously.

Out of the house came Alice Adams, who had once refused to marry the boy Henry because she was several years the elder. At sight of the couple in the Gloucester hammock she stopped short.

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"Alice," said the man Henry, "congratulate us! We're engaged!"

Miss Adams, very wide-eyed, stared at her discarded suitor and at the slip of a girl to whom she had released him. He was still young; Miss Grosvenor was still younger; and Miss Adams had thought that her affection for both was largely maternal — or platonic. Here, under her very eyes, they had stepped upon a little pedestal and looked down upon her from the eminence of the betrothal. She was a woman, and three years ago Henry had thought he loved her.

"You're engaged?" she faltered. She came toward them, hands outstretched, smiling bravely. "I knew you'd find her some time, Henry," she said. "I — I congratulate you!"

CHAPTER VI

THE PLEASURE OF THEIR COMPANY

REPLYING to Henry's valued favor of the twelfth, announcing his engagement to Alice Glosvenor, the members of his family back in Navarre looked blankly at each other, gasped, said unanimously that they had expected it all along, and then wrote three charmingly characteristic letters to acquaint him with their various emotions on receipt of the information.

Roberta, who had just finished a novel by Marie Corelli and consequently felt more romantic than usual, filled twenty pages (at twenty words to the page) with heavily underscored statements that Henry was a pip-pin, an angel youth, a dear, sweet brother, but at the same time a heartless and unfeel-

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ing wretch to be so reticent with the most important details; and please to send by return mail a much more complete analysis of Miss Grosvenor, her abilities, her character, and her attributes even unto the third and fourth generation, including how she did her hair, and if she were one of *the* Grosvenors. Also — if he did n't mind and she would promise to burn his letter — when he first knew he loved her, and in what phrases he had conveyed the impression.

Mrs. Chalmers, sniffing, hoped piously on her best monogramed stationery, that the lady of his choice was good enough for Henry, and added that of course he must n't think of marrying for at least four or five years; for there was his age to consider (she meant his youth) and the high cost of living — and, above all things, he must n't plan an elaborate ménage for the first year. Young people are *so* extravagant nowadays.

Mr. Chalmers scrawled a brusque note from the Country Club to say that he was delighted, that it was exactly what would

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please him best, and that the assistant-superintendency of the wire-fence factory would be vacant whenever Henry was ready to bring his bride to Navarre and occupy the cottage on Oak Street that was to be his wedding-gift. "And," wrote Mr. Chalmers in conclusion, "the time to marry is when the girl is willing; so, if you can arrange it you'd better plan to be at your new desk on the first of December. As soon as I hear from you I shall forward a check for a little journey. P. S. Just made the first nine holes in 52."

The arrangement was so eminently satisfactory to all concerned, and Henry's sudden aversion to a long engagement was so well supported by the bait of the assistant-superintendency, that within six weeks the former football hero sat in the room he occupied with his friend Whitaker, and tested with an inquisitive forefinger the quality of the engraving on his own wedding invitation. He found it excellent.

"Well," said Henry pensively.

"Well, what?" demanded Whitaker.

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"It's just occurred to me for the first time," said Henry slowly, "to wonder how Navarre will take it."

"What d' you mean — take it?"

Henry sighed perplexedly.

"My dear fellow," soothed Whitaker, "so far as I know you don't owe anybody any money out there. They're all your friends, are n't they? When Alice floats into that collection of mud huts you call Navarre if the men don't get together afterward and admit you've captured the finest little lady in the world — I'm wrong, that's all — I'm wrong!"

"Why, you ignoramus!" exploded Henry. "I've got the men eating out of my hand; it's the *girls* I'm bothering about."

"The girls?"

"Certainly."

"Why bother about 'em at all? Let 'em alone; that's *my* principle."

"Girls," said Henry sagely, "are — odd. I've known those girls out home for a good many years, and it's just occurred to me

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that they may not be desperately happy to see me come back married."

"Oh!" said Whitaker, "I begin to see. When you were on the All-American you went home for a vacation —"

"Exactly."

"And you think some of them may have thought —"

"I don't say that," protested Henry. "I don't say anything like it; but there's no accounting for tastes."

"You mean that they won't be glad to see you simply because you married an Easterner instead of a local product?"

Henry tossed the invitation to the table. "As a matter of fact, Whit, out in Navarre they think that anybody from the East — especially Boston — is trying to patronize them; and the one thing small-town society won't stand is to be patronized. Why, when I went back there two years ago I did n't dare to wear any old clothes!"

"Are n't they your friends?"

"Yes, but they're women. And, especially out there where I live, it's hard for

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a town to realize that there are other towns; or for girls to see that there are other girls. It's going to be an ordeal — not so much for me as for Alice — and I'm disturbed. I tell you the more I see of girls the less I know about 'em."

"Clever!" said his friend. "But I've heard it before; it is n't original. Come, you, you want Navarre to stand on its hind legs and wag its tail, don't you? Well, then, the thing for you to do is to plot out a campaign."

"Campaign! You mean a riot!"

"The word," insisted Whitaker, "was campaign. If you want the home girls to behave you've got to reduce 'em to a quivering pulp. If they expect you to patronize them, don't! If they've spotted Alice as a proud and haughty aristocrat from the effete East, make her put on a calico apron and water the garden. If the men think your job in the factory is grafted from your father, outwit 'em; get to work ahead of time and work late. And for the first month or two don't turn down any invitations; put

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on your soup-and-fish suit and go to everything."

"It sounds reasonable," mused the prospective bridegroom.

"Furthermore," said Whitaker, warming to the subject, "you want to start out being democratic, Henry. Take off your hat to the judge and the minister — I assume you have all modern improvements — and pat the station-agent's kid on the head. Get a reputation for mixing with the common people and then turn exclusive over night, and you'll have the ladies wearing a path across your front lawn on second Thursdays. Do you grasp the idea?"

"I hope it won't be necessary," said Henry fervently; "but if it is — I wonder if it would work?"

"One thing more. Ask Alice if she does n't think she ought to wear her best hat when she gets off the train at Navarre."

"Whitaker," demanded Henry, staring at him with deep admiration, "you're a wizard! Where did you pick up all this diplomatic stuff anyway?"

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"Merely a genius for it," admitted Whitaker. "I inhale it. You see the only real difference between Chicago and Navarre is the number of people you see on the street, and I've got two sisters-in-law in Chicago. I think you misjudge your friends, Henry; but of course you're anxious for Alice to make a hit with them. Don't worry; I'll coach you. Trust your friends for friendship, old boy; but when you want advice, come to an expert!"

THREE days before the wedding Whitaker, as best man, gave Henry his breakfast, filled his pockets with cigars and escorted him to Lawrenceville, where he delivered him to Miss Grosvenor at the station with outspoken relief. Miss Grosvenor, admirably chaperoned by a maiden aunt who disapproved of the match, preserved a decorous mien until after dinner, when, cornering Henry in the library, she collapsed into his arms and wept just enough to demon-

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strate that his favorite necktie was not fast color.

"Oh, Henry!" she cried tremulously;
"I'm — s-scared!"

"There's nothing to scared about, dear."

"But I've never even seen Navarre!
And I'm s-so afraid they won't l-like
me!"

"Nonsense!" said Henry firmly.
"They'll be crazy about you. Of course it
would have been easier if some of my family
were coming to the wedding, but that can't
be helped. They ought to have known bet-
ter than to eat canned oysters this month
anyway." He kissed her adequately.
"Now don't you feel better?"

"Y-yes," admitted Miss Grosvenor; "but
I'm still s-scared."

"Now see here," he instructed her, "you
just sit steady in the boat and you'll have a
good time. Navarre is n't any giddy me-
tropolis, but there's a good crowd of young
people, and a country club, and plenty of
excitement. And in three or four months,
if everything goes well, perhaps we can

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afford one of those little steam-roller runabouts; it won't be as dull as you think."

"Have you lots of friends out there, Henry?"

"I turn 'em away," he said euphemistically. "I know everybody in town and everybody knows me. Don't you worry about that."

"Are they awfully good friends?"

"The best that grow," he alleged.

"Do they think a l-lot of you?"

Henry wavered between modesty and the truth. "Well," he said finally, "they gave me a garden party on the lawn of the Methodist Church — and I was n't a Methodist. That's all I can say."

Miss Grosvenor crept closer to him and winked rapidly. "You think they'll approve of your m-marriage?"

"They certainly will — after they've seen you."

"But, Henry, how do you know they *are* your friends?"

"I don't understand."

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"I m-mean — what would you do for a friend who was being married?"

"Oh!" said Henry. "Why, I'd probably write him a cheer-up letter and send him a salad-fork, one of those wooden things with a silver grip."

"And if the f-friend were a girl?"

"Same thing; I always do."

"And what would you expect a real friend to do for you?"

Henry hesitated. "I'm not very strong for this give-and-take business," he said, "but I'd rather expect my real friends to remember me. I would n't hold it against them if they forgot; but they would n't forget."

"Henry, dear," said Miss Grosvenor, "I'd go with you anywhere — whether I knew anybody there or n-not. But — but I do like people so, and I want them to like me — and I don't want your friends to be m-mad because you married me."

"Silly!" said Henry.

"I don't w-want them to think you've made a m-mistake."

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"Silly!" said Henry, very gently.

Miss Grosvenor dashed a hand over her eyes. "Let's go in and look at the p-presents," she said uncertainly. "They're p-perfectly lovely, and there are hardly any d-duplicates!"

The erstwhile den of Mr. Grosvenor, who now had to do his smoking on the veranda, had become a temporary bazar that fairly dazzled the prospective bridegroom. Long tables discreetly swathed in folds of linen upheld a wealth of wedding accessories beyond his power to comprehend or to appreciate. He moved among them carefully, praising with voluble praise those articles whose utility he recognized, and tactfully avoiding explicit criticism of such strange treasures as a silver trivet, a pair of grape-scissors and a patent egg-boiler that looked like a tooth-brush holder.

Miss Grosvenor followed him attentively, calling his attention to inscriptions on the cards. "This is from Uncle T-Tilbury; he's the tall one with red whiskers. This is your s-sister's chocolate-pot; I like it, don't

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you? The Adams f-family sent those coasters; are n't they dear? And your friend, Mr. Whitaker, sent that beautiful p-percolator, and — the Grants — that — that —"

Her voice trailed away into the distance, for Henry, suddenly very tense and open-eyed, was staring about him in alarm, snatching a card here and a card there, taking the name at a glance and passing to the next, and always closing his lips a little firmer and his hands a little tighter.

"Alice!"

"Y-yes?"

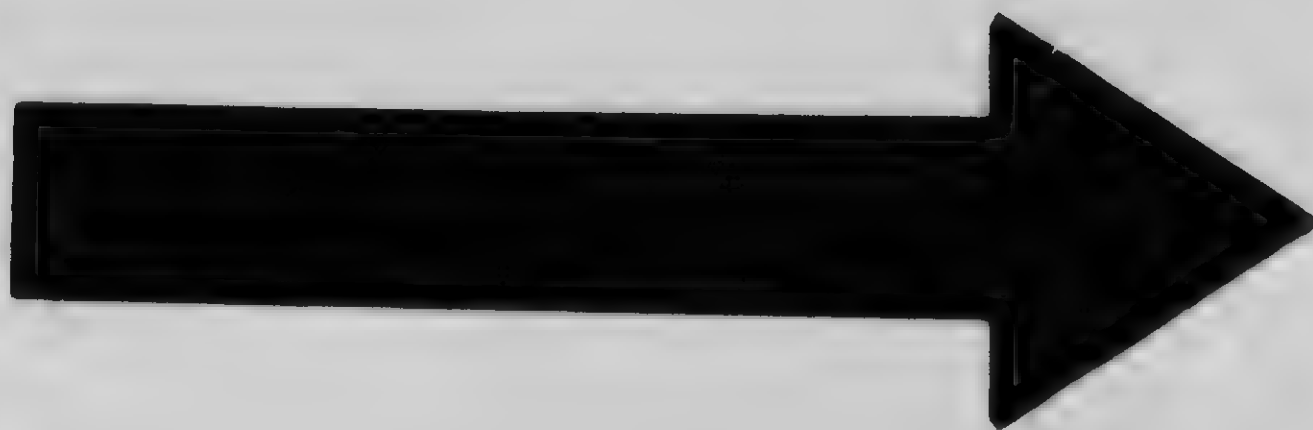
"Did n't anything come from Navarre?"

She spread her hands impotently. Henry came a step nearer.

"Nothing?"

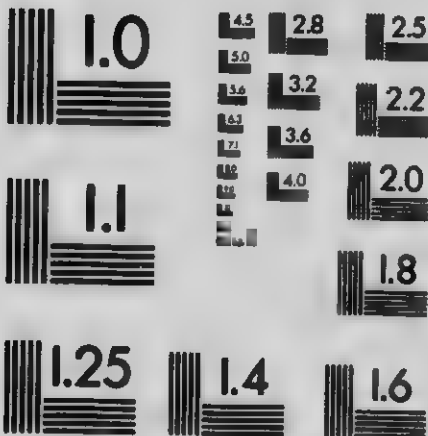
She shook her head.

"N-nothing," she whispered, "only that beautiful gift from your s-sister. You know, I'm not m-material either, Henry, but I'm going out to l-live in Navarre with you, and it l-looks as though your friends *did* think you've — made a m-mistake — and I'm so — s-scared!"



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Henry thrust his hands into his coat pockets and whistled raucously.

"Do you blame me? You know I'm not — m-material —"

"Stung!" said the bridegroom. "I — would n't have believed it. I don't know what to make of it. Of course Dad's giving us a little house, and my mother —"

He took the small girl swiftly in his arms and as suddenly released her. The maiden aunt, who did n't believe in kissing, came through the doorway and proffered a letter.

"If I were your mother, Alice," she said, "I'd have these things packed away until you need them. I don't care for this — ostentation." She departed with a sidelong glance at her own gift, a silver water-pitcher of exceptional value which had taken her quite two days to find, because the pattern she had in mind was unusual.

Miss Grosvenor tilted her nose to display her independence.

"What is it, Henry?"

He wrinkled his forehead.

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"It's from Roberta; I can't make anything out of it; see if you can."

Miss Grosvenor took the letter and read:

Dear Henry:

Don't be alarmed, you old peach. I told everybody not to do it, but they wouldn't listen to me. It's all right; I promised not to let on and I'm not — only it's all right. Don't be peevish.

Ptomaines are a little better; sorry we can't be there. *Never again* on oysters.

Oodles of love from BOBS.

"What on earth is she talking about?" said Henry.

Miss Grosvenor smiled wanly up at him. "I don't know; but I f-feel better, Henry."

"You do?"

"Yes. Y-you see I know your sister will l-like me anyway."

The bridegroom opened his mouth slowly, and closed it more slowly yet. "I wish I understood you women," he said regretfully.

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"Now, how in the name of matrimony can you know that?"

"Because I 'll like *her*," said Miss Grosvenor convincingly.

AND so the unreasonable wheel of life spun again, and Henry Chalmers awoke at seven o'clock in the morning to reflect that he had slept in the house of the bride's parents, and to make sure that the ring, which was under his pillow, had been unmolested by burglars while he slept. Reassured, he dozed again, one hand extended under the pillow. Silence.

Into the room tiptoed Whitaker, the best man, who, after regarding Henry with an envious eye, prodded him vigorously between the second and third ribs.

"Get out!" said Henry drowsily.

"Get up!" said Whitaker. "Heavens! How unlovely is a man asleep! Come on, Henry!" He prodded more violently.

"Ow!" yelled the bridegroom, taking the floor at a bound. "You coward!" He

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closed on the best man and pinned him helplessly against the wall. "Take that!" said Henry, scientifically applying the third principle of jiu-jitsu.

"It's time — to get up!" gasped the best man. "Are you — awake?"

"Am I? What do *you* think?"

Whitaker dodged and gained the door. "You're a fine man to be married," he scoffed. "Don't you know breakfast is in twenty minutes? How do you like your eggs, hot or cold?"

Henry sobered instantly. "You don't need to go just yet," he said generously. "Sit down a second."

"I'm with you," promised the best man. "How's your nerve?"

"Good; how's yours?"

He performed his ablutions and proceeded to dress with the celerity born of four years of nine o'clock recitations when the alarm was set for eight-thirty.

"Oh," said Henry casually, "I suppose you might as well have this."

The best man accepted the little purple box

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with due reverence and pressed the spring. A band of untarnished gold gleamed brightly between swelling coverts of white satin, and Whitaker was constrained to remove it and examine the interior decoration.

" 'H. C. to A. G., 1913,' " he read. " It is n't so bad, Henry."

" Read the rest of it, why don't you? "

" I don't see any more."

" '18 K,' " explained Henry. " The trouble with you college graduates is that you have n't learned thoroughness and accuracy."

The best man, who was enamored of two Wellesley, three Smith, and six Briarcliff girls, and did n't know that he was destined to the life of a bachelor, sighed profoundly. " That's all right," he stated. " If the thing were solid brass it would n't make any difference. The principle is the same. Gee, Henry! You're a lucky guy! "

" Thanks; how do I look? "

" Nervous as a pickpocket; why not? "

" You'll stand by me, old fellow? "

" That's what I'm paid for," said Whit-

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aker gruffly. "You're not still worried about — Navarre, are you?"

"Yes, I am."

"You remember what I told you, and you'll have 'em standing on their heads. Ready to go down?"

"In a minute. I'm a lucky man, Whit."

"You're right, you are," he exhaled exhaustively. "Life's a serious proposition, Henry. Here to-day, there to-morrow. I may not see you again for centuries."

"You'll go back to Chicago as soon as you're through Law School?"

"I'll bet my bootware I will," said the future Probate Judge of Cook County.

"You'll come to see us?"

"I'll be there."

"Good boy!" said Henry, thumping him on the back. "And — Whitaker."

"Yes?"

"Always the same between us?"

"Always," said his friend, knowing in his heart that the great untruth was spoken, but rising to the impossible like a man. He had two married brothers, had Whitaker, and he

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knew the immensity of distance between the souls of bachelor and benedick; but, "Always the same, old scout," reassured Whitaker.

"Then," said Henry, patting his tie, "we — might as well go down to breakfast, had n't we?"

"I'm with you," returned the best man, guiding his huge friend to the stairway.

"Gee, Henry! You're a happy man!"

AMEN," said the clergyman, and Henry, turning, stooped and kissed the bride.

Among the faces, familiar and unfamiliar, that confronted him in the great living-room of the Grosvenors, the freckled visage of his stanch friend Whitaker stood out like a beacon on uncharted seas. A grim smile played on Whitaker's lips as he marshaled the ushers to their task; a smile that softened now and then as he caught sight of Miss Grosvenor's — no, Mrs. Chalmers' — eyes, or intercepted a glance from the bridegroom Henry. So far, thought Whitaker, it had been easy; but any parrot could stumble

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through the responses. The crisis was to come some two weeks later, and, as field general of the expedition against Navarre, he felt himself responsible for the conduct of the invading party, and looked it.

Whitaker sighed despondently — he was much given to sighing during these last days — and sought a partner for the wedding supper. Miss Adams, Henry's first love in Freshman year, was maid of honor and his legitimate prey; but he was afraid of Miss Adams and rejoiced when the aggressive Jones boy slipped in ahead of him. The best man thought of pretty Miss Hollingsworth, who had awakened Henry to the essential seriousness of the universe, and found her congratulating the bridegroom.

"And a true union of souls," Miss Hollingsworth was saying, "is what I hope for you both, Henry."

"She's miffed!" muttered the expert, stealing cautiously out of the tableau. "Now — Miss Cartwright!"

He was halted in full course by the sight of Miss Cartwright disappearing into the

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den in company with the ringleader of the ushers.

"Oh, well," sighed the best man, "I did n't want any of this flapdoodle supper anyway. Later I can catch a ham sandwich at the North Station."

He surreptitiously mopped his forehead and was glad to note that time was flying comfortably — so comfortably that for the next half-hour he smoked two of Mr. Grosvenor's cigars and talked politics with one of the detectives on the veranda. Action was demanded of him at precisely the moment when he longed for it. There was just time to see that the motor was in readiness; to make certain that the rose-leaf confetti was at hand — a sudden dash to overtake the clergyman, already on the point of departing fee-less — and then just time enough to charge the orchestra with new directions, to see that the boxes of wedding cake were ready for distribution, to hurry to Henry's room and pack his suitcases — and then the bridegroom came in. Apart from the fact that his collar was slightly

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wilted and his hair somewhat disarranged he was the same Henry — for the last time.

"Clothes right here," said Whitaker sharply. "Get a move on, old scout!"

"Ten minutes; take a tug at that shoe, will you?"

"It was a great wedding, old boy — lots of class. Everything went off perfectly."

"Isn't she a dream!" said Henry, ecstatically gesturing with his wilted collar.

"Right! But I certainly thought you'd drop that ring, you old butter-fingers!"

"Did you ever see any one lovelier? I tell you —"

"Collar!" said Whitaker, presenting a fresh one; and, shortly afterward: "Tie!"

"Good work, Whit!" said the bridegroom. "You saved my life; never forget it, never! Alice told me to tell you so. Say, why didn't you come up and kiss the bride? I would n't have cared."

"Aw, here's your coat," said Whitaker, blushing vividly. "This suitcase ready to be locked?"

"All ready; is the car waiting?"

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"At the door. You're to meet Alice at the top of the landing and sprint for it. I'll have the door open; don't bother about these things. Good luck, old man!"

"Whit, if they aren't good to Alice — I'll be back East again!"

"Rubbish! She'll knock 'em off their feet! Write me about it, won't you?"

"Yes — oh, of course! Where's my hat? Where did you say I meet Alice? Where —"

"Top of the landing," said Whitaker, propelling Henry into the hall. "Turn up your collar, old boy; confetti tickles. Good luck!"

Henry, peering from the window of the limousine at the wedding guests on the veranda, saw his loyal friend Whitaker far in the background; but he could n't know, and never did know, that Whitaker, bachelor of arts and matrimonial expert, still smiling grimly but with suspiciously bright eyes, was saying to himself: "Well, I hope she's good enough for him; but I don't know. He's a pretty good old scout — that Henry."

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And Henry, unconscious that the devotion of his friend was no less than the devotion of his bride, rapturously kissed Mrs. Chalmers, born Grosvenor, without recollecting that he had forgotten even to shake hands with the best man.

THE shades of Saturday afternoon were slowly beginning to lengthen when the Fast Mail roared over the trestle of the little river that marks the county line. On the observation platform of the last car Mr. and Mrs. Henry Chalmers, side by side in camp-chairs, watched the scenery flit past, and occasionally smiled a brave smile to indicate that courage was still high and hope rampant.

During their two weeks in the Adirondacks, exploring all the Lover's Leaps and Ausable Chasms, eating table d'hôtes, and picking confetti out of their wardrobes, they had found time to speculate much on Navarre, and of its probable attitude toward

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them. Letters from Roberta had repeatedly assured them that Navarre was favorably inclined, but Roberta was known to be optimistic and Henry was correspondingly depressed. He could see only one solution to the problem, and that was simply that Navarre had forgotten him. When he had spent the summer of his Junior year at home he had been an all-American right tackle and a hero; but now that his name was elided from the sporting pages of the newspapers he returned a stranger. So it was with the heroes of the war; who remembers now who was first in the surf at Baiquiri? Navarre had forgotten!

A well-known landmark goaded his memory, and he pointed out the Fair Grounds to Alice. The circus-poster on the Agricultural Hall were the same as when he had last looked to see them.

"Four miles more," he said with assumed cheerfulness. "We'd better get our things together."

"Is it far to the house — after we get there?"

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"Not far — so long as we don't have to walk behind a brass band."

He glorified the porter service with a silver dollar. Oh, if he only knew whether Navarre had ignored or only forgotten him! It was n't for himself — it was for Alice —

The porter carried their luggage to the vestibule.

"There 's the factory," said Henry.

The Fast Mail slowed protestingly to the brakes.

"The Academy!" said Henry.

He helped his bride to her feet, and started forward. "And this," said Henry, "is Navarre."

The two outlanders stood on the platform from which all Society had cheered Henry two years before when he went back for a successful campaign against Yale. Now there were a handful of truckmen, a runner for the Commercial Hotel, a corset salesman from New York, two hackmen, and — yes! late as usual, but wonderfully radiant, and loving, and excited, there was Roberta, tearing down Main Street in the brand-new

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touring car — and she had recovered from ptomaines just in time to learn to drive it!

"Oh!" shrilled Roberta. "Oh, Henry!"

"Bobs!" he said, disentangling a long wisp of her hair from his scarf-pin. "Bobs, my —"

He stepped back, and stared amazedly at the two girls embracing each other.

"Oh!" said Roberta. "I *know* I'm going to love you! Come ahead; you'll want to see your new house! It's all ready; it's a peach!" She laughed hysterically and danced back to the touring car.

"Ready!" repeated Henry dumbly. "You don't really mean it?"

"Of course I do! Father and Mother are there now; they wanted to welcome you in your own house." She put her lips to his ear. "She's a darling!" said Roberta.

In the tonneau Mrs. Chalmers leaned close to her young husband. "I t-told you so," said Mrs. Chalmers with supreme confidence.

For the next five minutes Henry sat in paralytic silence. No welcoming delegation had met them, yet every shaded street and

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every house breathed a welcome. No one had remembered his wedding with gifts, and yet the atmosphere of his home town was pregnant with friendship—the greatest gift of all. They shot past his old house—dark now, and silent; he observed that the cast-iron deer under the elms was badly oxydized. At the next corner the Grahams'—silent and dark. Around the corner was Oak Street, and the fourth house was his. With a terrible sense of homesickness and chagrin he saw that it, too, was dark and silent.

"Here we are!" cried Roberta. "End of the line; don't leave any packages in the car!"

"You two run ahead," said Henry. "I'll bring the traps."

"No, all together."

"All right; run along."

"Your key," said Roberta on the veranda.

Henry accepted it, fumbled at the lock, and threw open the door. On the instant the new house—the wedding gift of the senior Chalmers family—blazed light from

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every window. On the threshold, hands outstretched, stood the parents of the bridegroom, and behind them, crowding hall and stairway, dining-room and living-room and library, suddenly shouting and cheering and laughing and crying — according to sex, age and degree of sentiment — stood Navarre!

"Why!" said Henry, dropping both suitcases. "Why—"

They had surrounded him before he could form another syllable. On the right he saw his bride dragged by Roberta into the maelstrom of Our Set, and then he himself was swallowed up among the men.

"So long as we could n't come to the wedding," quavered old Judge Andrews, "we thought we'd have a little party out here. Surprise you, does it?"

"Surprise!" said Henry. "I feel — knocked off my feet!"

He was in the tiny library, among his own well-loved books, and rows and rows of immaculate new volumes, the gift of his old class at the Academy. He was in the dining-room, where the table shone with silver

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and glass and Minton china, marked and carded, and on the cards he read the names of those he thought had forgotten him. And the table was set for two!

"Oh, we're all going home!" laughed George Graham. "Thanks awfully, Henry, but we simply can't stay to dinner!"

"But — George —"

"You see," said Graham, speaking more loudly than a dozen others who spoke at once, "we thought we'd rather put things right in here than send them up to Lawrenceville just to be shipped back. Say, how does that mahogany serving-table strike you? Old Judge Andrews sent it, and —"

"But — George —"

"And upstairs," said his old friend, "the girls have stacked enough linen and stuff to last a couple of generations. The Sewing Club quit work on the Senegambian heathen two months ago —"

"Went to smoke?" asked some one else. "You remember Smith's drug store? They sent up two boxes of cigars this afternoon!"

"And," said Mrs. Graham, who had gim-

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leted her way to his elbow, "and, Henry — are n't we progressive? — mahogany 'cylinders' for the table! And there's a mahogany dressing-table from Helen Richmond's father —"

The pompous young lawyer, who had tried for twenty minutes to get a hearing, at last succeeded in catching Henry's eye. He had written out his speech two days before and did n't want it to be sidetracked.

"Mr. Chalmers," he began, "in behalf of your sincere friends in our fair city —"

The guest of honor should n't have returned thanks until the oration was finished, but he was in no mood for convention. "Friends!" he faltered. "Friends —"

"Everybody out!" said Graham, sensing his emotion. "Cut out the speech, Mr. Advocate; we'll give you leave to print! Clear the house! Give 'em a chance, everybody!"

Laughing, congratulating, they massed around him for a final handshake, a final welcome and a final invitation to come over and see them some time, and be sure to bring his wife; and then slowly they melted away,

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until only half a dozen were left in a little group in the living-room.

The bridegroom, who had feared for Alice's status in Navarre, saw her the center of Our Set, which was bounded on the north by Roberta, and on the south, east, and west by Elsie Jones, the youngest, but the best dresser of them all.

"My dear," Elsie Jones was saying, "you positively *must* tell me where you get your hats!"

"I m-made this one m-myself," said Mrs. Henry of Navarre.

In the dead silence which preceded the flood of admiration and the unqualified surrender of Our Set she saw Henry hunting blindly for the telephone; he wanted to send a night message to Whitaker.

"Come on in," she called happily. "I guess it's all right, dear; we're talking m-millinery!"

THE END